



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council

Ireland 2040: Our Plan

Submission by Tipperary County Council







1.0 Introduction	2
2.0 Tipperary: A Vision for 2040	4
3.0 A Place-Making Strategy: Towns	8
4.0 A Place Making Strategy: Rural Areas	12
5.0 Tipperary's Role in a Regional Context	16
6.0 Transitioning to a Low Carbon Economy & Bio-Economy	18
7.0 Tourism	24
8.0 Education Opportunities	26
9.0 Strategic Infrastructure	28
10.0 Conclusion	32

Tipperary County Council welcomes the preparation of 'Ireland 2040: Our Plan' and looks forward to actively participating in the delivery of a sustainable, prosperous and competitive Ireland over the next 20 years.

This submission has been prepared on behalf of the Elected Members of Tipperary County Council. In preparing this submission, a vision for Tipperary in 2040 has been developed, which is outward looking, nationally and spatially focused, and informed by a strong evidence base of the strengths of our economy, our communities and our natural resources. The Council trusts that the submission will positively and proactively contribute to the preparation of a new national planning framework (NPF) and in achieving a country which "can be the best it can be" in 2040.

The Council supports a new vision and approach to spatial planning for the Country, and through this submission will demonstrate how Tipperary, through collaboration and co-operation with our regional partners, and by harnessing our own strengths in terms of human capital, natural and cultural resources, can contribute to delivering the NPF over the next 20 years.

The submission is structured broadly in accordance with the themes set out in the Issues Paper. The submission will address key policy areas which the Council considers relevant nationally and to Tipperary, and actions to support the successful implementation of the new NPF, as follows:

- Tipperary: A Vision for 2040
- A Place Making Strategy: Towns
- A Place Making Strategy: Rural Areas
- Tipperary's Role in a Regional Context
- Transitioning to a Low Carbon Economy and Bio-Economy
- Tourism
- Education Opportunities
- Strategic Infrastructure



Tipperary's Assets and Characteristics

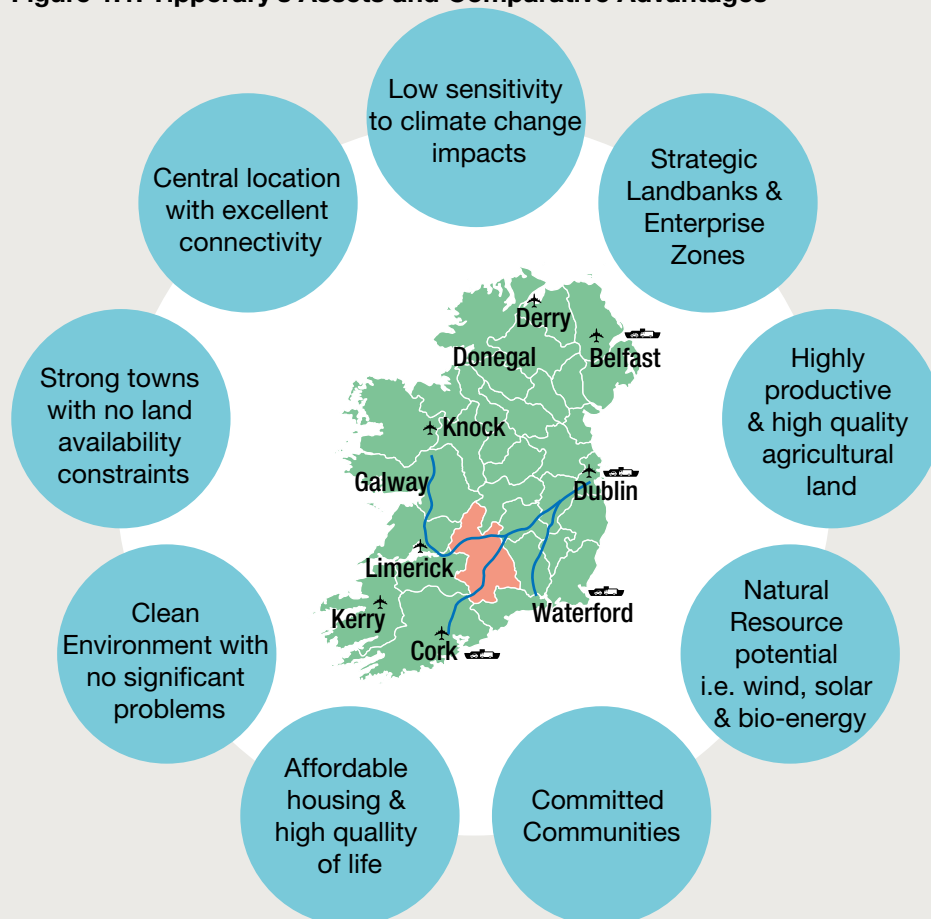
Tipperary has a population of 160,441¹ and is the 6th largest county by area in the country. The County has been long characterised by some of the richest and most productive farmland in the country, its internationally renowned equine sector; diverse mountain ranges and inland waterways, strong network of towns and sporting and cultural heritage.

¹ Preliminary census figures 2016.

While Tipperary is a rural county, one of its key strategic assets is its central location and excellent connectivity to Dublin and other regional cities. In this respect, the County and its towns, have a strong interdependent relationship with City Regions, a factor and opportunity which should be harnessed and developed in the new NPF.

Since the preparation of the NSS, Tipperary has also built on its natural resources, robust environment and working rural landscapes. The County is a leader in climate change action and renewable energy development, and arising from its strong agricultural base and location in the 'food cradle of Ireland', the County is now a significant contributor to the internationally important agri-food sector. Tipperary's many key spatial assets and comparative advantages are illustrated below.

Figure 1.1: Tipperary's Assets and Comparative Advantages





Tipperary Governance

The establishment of Tipperary County Council in June 2014, whereby 10 local authorities were merged into one unified organisation, has been the most significant milestone in Tipperary's governance for over 150 years. This reform in local governance, which has included the establishment of structures such as the Local Community Development Committee, Economic Forums and Tourism Companies, working together on an all county basis, has been transformative for Tipperary.

The Council has delivered a new vision and strategic planning framework for the planning and development for the county, is seizing the opportunities of world wide-recognition for the name and brand of 'Tipperary' and for economic development as part of the centre of the new Southern Region. The successful merger of the Council has also demonstrated Tipperary's strong governance, leadership and vision to work for the betterment of our citizens. Therefore, Tipperary has proven through governance, vision, talent and ambition that it can contribute to and deliver national priorities over the course of the next 20 years.

In order for the NPF to deliver for the County, there must be collaboration and not competition among the governance structures identified for growth in the NPF. Tipperary has long recognised the importance of partnership in delivery of national and regional goals. The County is bordered by eight counties, and has worked extensively with partners on an inter and intra-regional level in delivering strategies and projects, such as large scale infrastructure (M8 and M7), the marketing and development of Lough Derg and regional strategic planning and transportation plans. The Council has continued to build on these relationships, particularly in the Mid-West and South-East, through the preparation and delivery of the Mid-West and South-East Regional Action Plans for Jobs.



Vision for Tipperary in 2040

Tipperary County Council's Corporate Plan vision, reflects the purpose of the NPF, whereby through working together and ambition, a prosperous country with a high quality of life for our communities can be achieved.

Tipperary Corporate Plan Vision:

“Ambitious for our communities, demanding of ourselves and working to a shared purpose to deliver prosperity across the county”

Tipperary is already a great place to live, work and invest. The Council is now building on our reputation and identify, with a shared purpose of driving economic development, creating new opportunities for our citizens.

In looking to the future, and 2040, Tipperary's key strategic aims, which should be reflected in the NPF are:

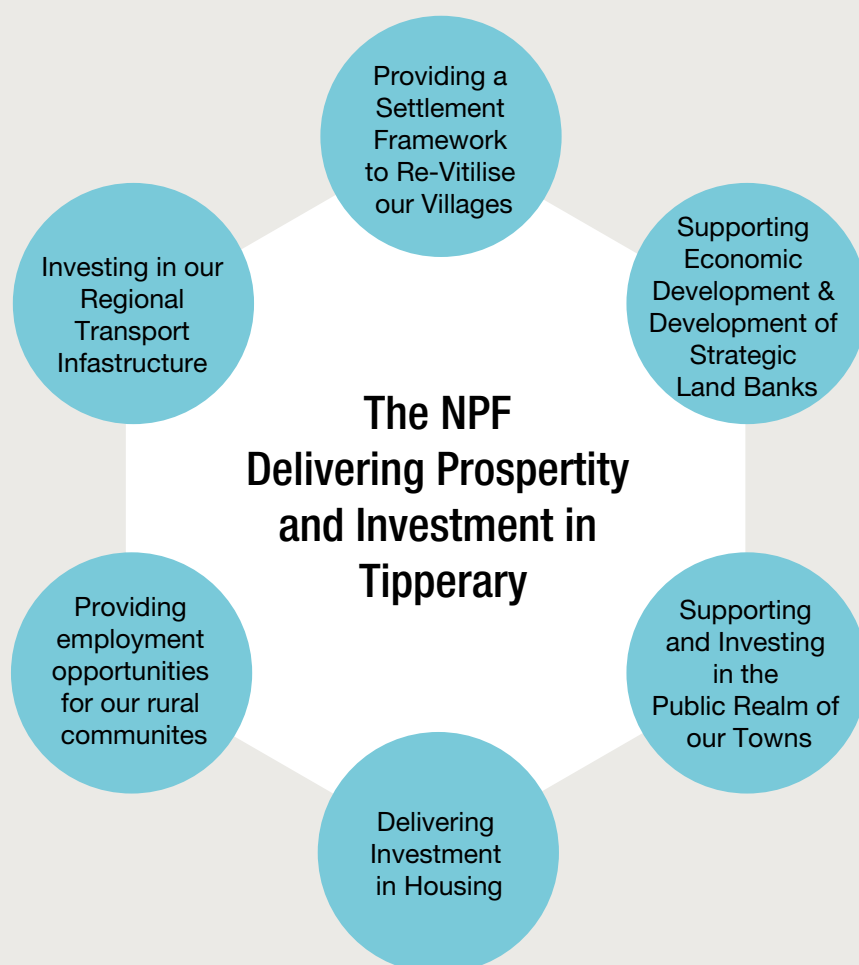
- Strong prosperous towns which are vibrant and viable, economically self sufficient and quality places to live and work.
- Re-vitalised attractive villages providing local services and employment opportunities for sectors of the community.
- An international and national tourism destination as part of Ireland's Ancient East brand.
- A strong rural economy, harnessing sustainable natural resources; to support a national bio-economy and agri-food sector and renewable energy sectors.
- A county which is delivering effective regional development through co-operation and collaboration with its partners in the Southern Region.
- A connected county with excellent strategic, road and rail infrastructure.
- Strong sustainable inclusive, communities, supported by community services and economic opportunities.
- High level of energy self-sufficiency, energy conservation and ability to adapt to a changing climate.
- A natural and built heritage which is protected enhanced and valued for future generations to enjoy.



The NPF will be critical in achieving these strategic objectives, by providing a spatial framework for growth and development, but equally a framework for all specific departmental or ‘sectoral’ areas and investment plans. Therefore, the NPF through the Capital Investment Plan, will need to be capable of delivering not only physical infrastructure, but also investment support for economic development, housing, place-making and community development.

Figure 1.2 below illustrates some key investment priority areas that the NPF will need to incorporate for Tipperary to achieve its strategic aims.

Figure 1.2: The NPF, Tipperary Strategic Aims and Investment Priorities



Tipperary has a very strong settlement hierarchy of towns and villages which are geographically spread across the county and each are important ‘places’ supporting regional and local level development and centres for their communities. The NPF in developing a new place-making strategy for the Country, should recognise, support and establish an investment framework for these settlements.

Each of Tipperary towns have unique assets and characteristics (economic, spatial, cultural, heritage etc.) which can be branded and marketed. They offer a high quality of life, and are important economic and service centres for their rural hinterlands and communities. While the Issues Paper has suggested that not all settlement centres can be promoted for growth, the Council is strongly of the view that an effective national place-making strategy needs to recognise the role of towns as growth centres in their own right.

Clonmel, our largest town, was not afforded a role in the current NSS which reflected its regional economic importance and the Council is strongly of the view that this needs to be addressed in the new NPF. Clonmel is a vibrant town of over 22,000 people, has a strong cluster of pharmaceutical industries and has successfully attracted over 3,500 FDI jobs. The Council has invested significantly in Clonmel in order for its potential to be realised and is working with its partners in securing Clonmel’s future economic growth, through, for example, business clustering of life sciences industries with Waterford, Kilkenny and Carlow.

Clonmel is also the location of a 300 acre strategic land bank in the ownership of Tipperary County Council (250 acres) and the IDA (50 acres). Ballingarrane Business Park is strategically located off the Limerick Road roundabout and has been serviced with access roads and key infrastructure. It is also the location of the Questum Building, which was developed in conjunction with LIT and is the location for a number of start up businesses. Ballingarrane Business Park offers a significant opportunity for job creation within a high quality setting.

To inform the preparation of the NPF, the Council commissioned a study entitled *“A Planning and Economic Case for Clonmel – Review of the 2002-2020 National Spatial Strategy”*. The findings of this study (attached in Appendix A) robustly demonstrate that Clonmel is an important driver of regional socio-economic growth and should be considered as part of the development of the NPF.



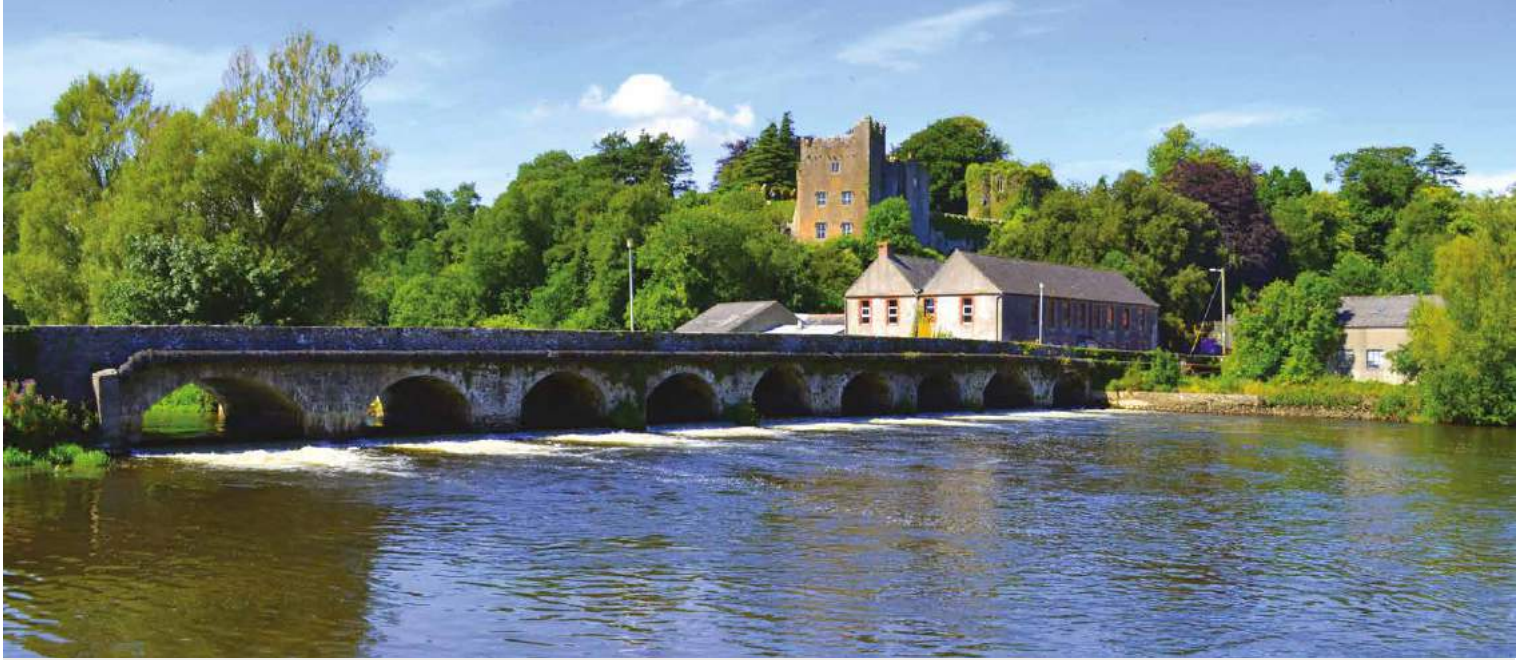
Capacity for Growth, Promotion and Development

The Council, over the past decade, actively promoted the development of each of our towns having consideration to their primary strengths, including tourism, heritage, education etc. Moreover, significant national and local investment in physical, economic and social infrastructure has taken place. Tipperary's towns now have significant existing capacity in terms of serviceable land, community and social infrastructure etc. In this respect, our towns have an ability to respond to and meet the current objectives of 'Construction 2020' and 'Re-building Ireland', in providing quality, affordable homes.

The NPF should also ensure that the growth potential and capacity of these towns is supported through critical infrastructure, in order to meet the growing population and deliver quality housing provision over the lifetime of the NPF.

The Council, along with partner agencies, IDA, EI etc. actively supports the economic development of towns in a number of ways, including the identification, development, and marketing of Strategic Employment Land Banks, including those in Clonmel, Nenagh, Roscrea, Tipperary, Lisheen and Thurles. The NPF needs to recognise the strategic economic role of these sites, and ensure that investment is provided to realise their potential.





Re-vitalising of Town Centres

Town centre growth and revitalisation is a priority for the Council and needs to be a core national objective in the NPF.

The NPF and broader national planning policy needs to respond to the challenges of town vitality in a holistic way. As aforementioned, towns are diverse in their influence but each has unique assets, which provide opportunities for place-making through 'Branding'. For example, Cashel is one of the most important tourism destinations in the Country and a central point in Ireland's Ancient East, while, Thurles is a sporting capital and one of the most connected towns in the County. Tipperary's towns should be supported as vibrant community and employment centres which offer a high quality of life and an alternative to those who wish to live outside the larger cities.

Furthermore, Town Centres will need to be re-imagined over the next 20 years, as more people shop and access services on-line. There is a need to nationally respond to these changes. National Planning Guidelines have to date focused on retail planning, however, at local level, Town Centre Management Structures are being put in place, which address all aspect of the vitality of town centres; retail, services, public realm, promotion etc. National policy should respond to these changes by preparing 'Town Centre Action Plans', and also ensure that local authorities are resourced with necessary expertise to assist communities in realising their potential. The Government also needs to provide critical investment in civic improvement plans, to showcase heritage assets and provide attractive places for people to visit and locals to interact.

In order to re-vitalise our rural town centres, support population growth and make effective use of land, the NPF also needs to address Town Centre living. In this respect, national planning policy needs to be revised to respond to the rural expectations. Incentives need to be considered, and best-practice design approaches need to be developed and marketed.



ACTIONS:

- The NPF should support Town Centre Management Partnerships as an effective mechanism to deliver town centre revitalisation.
- Ministerial Guidelines on 'Town Centre Action Plans' should be developed, with the role of the local authority to be clarified and resourced.
- The NPF should identify Town Centre revitalisation as a core objective of plan.
- Town Centre revitalisation should be a priority in the Capital Investment Plan and funding provided for Civic Public Realm Projects. Financial support is needed in Tipperary for civic improvement across our towns, including –
 - The re-development of Kickham Barracks in Clonmel into a creative civic educational and cultural quarter.
 - Re-furbishment of Liberty Square in Thurles.
 - Civic Improvement Plans in Carrick on Suir, Nenagh, Roscrea and Tipperary Town.
- The NPF should support the development of Strategic Employment Zones and Land Banks through investment in infrastructure, and support the promotion of these assets by the IDA and EI.
- The NPF should support Local Authority Land Use Activation Measures, e.g. review of enhancement of CPO powers, guidance for public private partnerships etc.
- Incentives should be developed to promote residential accommodation in town centres which meet the needs and expectation of the market, encourages a more sustainable pattern of development and effective use of land .
- Investment should be made in education, research and design competitions to promote town centre living to establish the key needs of future residents and allow for architectural design responses to meet expectations.

The Action Plan for Rural Development referenced the CEDRA vision for Rural Ireland as follows: *“to become a dynamic, adaptable, and outward looking multi-sectoral economy, supporting vibrant resilient and diverse communities experiencing a high quality of life”*. The Council considers that this statement encompasses what rural Ireland should be in 2040. Place-making in rural areas encompass all these elements and key areas for the NPFand Tipperary are set out below.

Rural Villages and Community Provision

In terms of rural settlement planning, sustainable communities are dependent on viable,vibrant villages. The NSS and the Issues Paper have placed little emphasis on the decline of the population of villages and services since the publication of the NSS (Loss of Services, Garda Stations, Schools, and Post Offices etc.) or proposed measures to address this decline. This is an issue of strategic national importance. In the absence of a targeted planning strategy and associated pro-active infrastructure and support actions, this decline will continue. Without direct and supportive policy, the country will see the loss of many of our villages by 2040. The NPF needs to acknowledge the factors which have contributed to the decline of villages and implement and resourcecross-departmental actions including those set out in the Rural Action Plan for Development.

The need to maintain, support and grow rural villages is particularly critical in order to respond to the needs of an ageing population. In Tipperary 58% of the current population live outside settlements above 1500 people. Given inward migration trends to urban areas, it follows that a significant, if not the majority of our over 65 population will live in rural areas by 2040. The NPF must respond to these needs and provide a vision for a high quality of life for the ageing population in the communities in which they grew up, by ensuring that the necessary services, facilities and supports are available within these communities.

The NPF also needs to set out a clear framework for rural services and for what can be expected to be delivered in rural towns and villages depending on their tier in a settlement strategy. For example, how will rural areas be serviced by GP/healthcare services, schools, Garda stations, post offices, and set out how community/elderly facilities etc. are to be provided. This approach will facilitate investment in services and facilities, to ensure provision is accommodated as locally as possible and maximise financial and public resources.

The delivery of new housing in rural settlements is severely constrained by the lack of an agreed approach to the delivery and maintenance of waste water treatment infrastructure. The NPF must make provision for a separate ‘Rural Settlement’ investment scheme to be established based on County Settlement Hierarchies, recognising that not all villages can be served by public waste water infrastructure. In this respect, where environmental capacity exists,low density housing cluster may be facilitated.

[illegible]

The Council has recently commissioned the preparation of “Cluster Guidelines for Rural Villages”, which will provide best practice approach to the development of small housing schemes taking account of market housing needs; environmental sustainability and the protection of character of the villages. The guidelines are being prepared through comprehensive stakeholder and community engagement, and following publication, it is intended to carry out an educational and promotional campaign to promote the development of rural residential schemes. It is the ambition for the project that these guidelines will provide best practice for the development of schemes throughout the County. The Council would welcome an opportunity to brief the Department on this initiative when completed.



Rural Economy

Ireland's natural resources are some of our biggest assets. Through the development of the agriculture, tourism, renewable energy sectors etc., the harnessing of these rural based assets not only sustain local employment but drive national economies. Rural areas have unlimited potential in these sectors. While this section focuses on agriculture, the importance of renewable energy and tourism is of significance and will be addressed in Section 5 and 6 of the submission.

Agriculture is not only of national but also of global importance. In particular, with the world population forecast to reach over 9 billion by 2040 (UN department of economic and social affairs) the production of food to sustain this population will be a key issue over the next 20 years.

While direct employment in agriculture may have decreased nationally, the industry is also part of a multi-faceted agri-food economy, which, through the implementation of Food Wise 2025, is targeted to increase primary production by 65% to almost €10 billion by 2025. The role and importance of agriculture must be recognised in the NPF, including the protection of productive farmlands. Moreover, continued innovation in farming practices and technologies must be supported while ensuring that Ireland's reputation for the production of high quality food is not put at risk.

Tipperary, located in the Golden Vale and known as the 'food cradle' of Ireland, has many natural competitive agricultural advantages and 12% of the County's residents² remain directly employed in this sector. As part of the national agri-food section, the Council is working with its partners in the Mid-West and South-East through Regional Action Plan for Jobs, and as an action is seeking the development of a National Food Centre of excellence in the County.

Since the abolition of milk quotas the concentration on dairying in Irish farms has been pronounced. This has led to a reduction in the numbers of farmers engaging in cereal production, cattle, sheep and other agricultural products. While dairying is a key growth area, the strength of the Irish agricultural sector has been built on diversity and not overly relying on any one sector. Farmers should be supported in maintaining a diverse and vibrant agricultural sector.

The NPF will need to create appropriate economic development opportunities in all parts of the country in order to address rural decline and regional imbalances. Rural areas should be able to accommodate opportunities around ICT based industries; multi/media & creative industry sectors; food based; renewable energy; agri tech; tourism; transport and in particular an added value bio-economy. A strong focus on the rural economy and its capacity in the NPF will act as a framework for new rural planning policies in County Development Plans and ensure consistency and economic success in rural areas across the country.

² Double the national average.



ACTIONS:

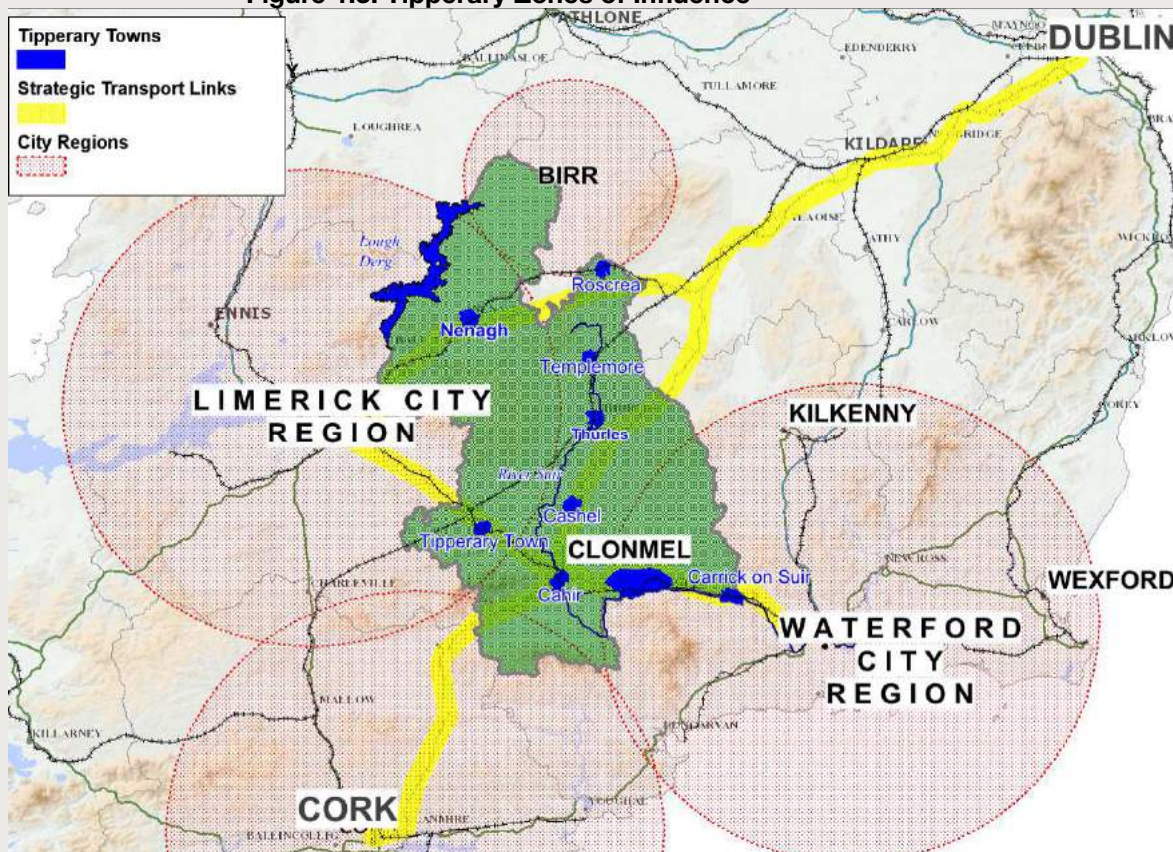
- The NPF should establish the ‘Re-vitalisation of Rural Villages’ as a core national objective, endorse actions contained in the Rural Development Action Plan and ensure that critical infrastructure is provided to facilitate growth and development
- The NPF Rural Settlement/Place-Making Strategy should be supported by Investment in Small Towns and Villages by Irish Water. In the review of the Irish Water Capital Investment Plan, a separate funding stream should be made available for ‘Rural Areas’ where a “social value” weighting is applied to the value for money and whole life costs evaluation.
- National Planning Guidelines should be revised to specifically provide best practice direction on plan-making for rural villages.
- Local Authorities should be resourced to develop pilot ‘Service Sites Schemes’ which can be developed on a cost neutral basis.
- Housing schemes in settlement centres should apply the concepts of *“lifetime neighbourhoods”*³, to include a variety of housing provision, including provision for the young, community centres, health services etc.
- The NPF should support the provision of multi functional ageing community facilities to cater for our changing demographics.
- The NPF should support the provision of disability friendly buildings and public spaces.
- Increase support should be provided for Village Enhancement Schemes to support local authorities and communities.
- The National Broadband Plan should be delivered as a matter of priority ensuring effective broadband in all areas of the country.
- The NPF should identify and reinforce the importance of our natural resources and their contribution to the national economy.
- The NPF should support the development of a National Food Centre of Excellence in Tipperary.
- The NPF should support farmers in maintaining and establishing non dairying farming operations.

3 Concept identified in Planning for the Elderly (RTPI, 2004).

The Issues Paper has clearly established that a radical step-change in national spatial planning is needed to ensure that the country can continue to grow economically and deliver a high quality of life for all its citizens. In order for our Regional Cities to become major international and national centres and engines of growth, it needs to be accepted that our regional cities, in isolation, cannot achieve the critical mass and economies of scale required to become these engines of growth.

Tipperary, as illustrated in Figure 1.3, benefits not only from its central location in the Southern Region, but also from its proximity to regional cities.

Figure 1.3: Tipperary Zones of Influence



To support and inform the preparation of the NPF, local authorities and partners in the Mid-West and South East Regions, came together, to develop new proposed City Region Models, which are part of separate submissions to the NPF process.

Tipperary's Role and Contribution in the Mid-West Limerick City Region

The Mid-West Limerick City region has a population of approximately 400,000 people and is centred on the City of Limerick, Shannon International Airport, together with large towns, settlements and rural hinterlands around it. With respect to Tipperary, the zone of influence extends to include the towns of Nenagh, Tipperary Town, Roscrea and Thurles. These towns, with a collective population of over 25,000 people, are all within a 1 hour drive from the Limerick City and have strong connectivity by road, rail and public transport. These towns would be important supporting growth centres in a number of ways including, providing affordable housing choice, an alternative high quality of life and skilled workforce. Moreover, through working on a collaborative basis, with enterprise agencies and third level institutions, such as the LIT, the towns can support new business clusters within the region, and support economic development in their own right. Tipperary's wider hinterland area also has many key natural assets in the region, including Lough Derg, which is a 15 minute drive from the City, with the towns of Ballina/Killaloe and Nenagh being the gateway to the Lakelands region of the Country.

Tipperary's Role and Contribution in the South East Waterford City Region

The South East Waterford City Region is centred on the City of Waterford, Belview Port, Rosslare Port, Waterford Airport, together with the urban areas of Clonmel, Carlow, Wexford and Kilkenny, the settlements and the rural areas around it. The South East Waterford City Region has a population of circa. 582,000 people and particularly benefits from its connectivity to both Europe and Britain through Rosslare Port.

While Waterford is not of the same urban scale as other regional cities, it has a cluster of large cities and towns within its natural hinterland, namely, Kilkenny, Clonmel, Wexford and Carlow. These centres, if promoted as a 'polycentric' city, have the capacity and potential to grow cohesively as one unit, while also facilitating an opportunity to expand economically and socially on their own. In this respect, Clonmel, is a critical centre, for the reasons set out in Section 4 for delivering effective regional balanced development.

Action:

The NPF should deliver a new Spatial Planning Framework which identifies, supports and drives the economic and social development of the 'Mid-West Limerick City Region' and the 'South East Waterford City Region' of which Tipperary is an integral part.

The NPF should examine international examples of how infrastructure funding could be put in place to drive the economic impact of the Regions and unlock further investment from other institutions, for example the European Investment Bank. One such model is the Scottish City Deals.

Tipperary:

A National Leader in the Energy Transition

The Transition to a Low Carbon Economy and providing secure supplies of competitive and affordable energy to our citizens and businesses is not only one of the Country's critical challenges but also a valuable economic opportunity. In this respect, the transition to a Low Carbon Economy should be a core theme of the NPF and the document should be closely aligned with, and give effect to the Government's White Paper on Energy.

Tipperary County Council has long recognised the importance of the low carbon energy transition, both to the quality of lives of citizens and the opportunities it brings in terms of rural economic growth and development. The County has a robust landscape and environment, and an abundance of renewable energy resources and therefore natural comparative advantage in harnessing energy from renewable resources. Equally the commitment of Tipperary County Council, Tipperary Energy Agency, third level institutions (LIT), business and communities has resulted in a thriving and innovative energy sector in the county.

This partnership has led to some key achievements and initiatives, including:

- The Council has met and exceeded national targets for energy efficiency in public buildings. Tipperary County Council is the owner of the largest solar installation in the county and has switched 90% of its heat use from fossil fuels to renewable combined heat and power.
- The Council is a signatory of the Covenant of Mayors and will be implementing a SEAP with ambitious energy targets and objectives across all sectors.
- The Tipperary Energy Agency (TEA) is internationally recognised, and in particular, is leading research and delivering exemplar community initiatives such as 'Superhomes', 'Better Energy Communities', 'Insulate Tipp' etc.
- Tipperary is home to Ireland's only community owned wind farm in Templederry.
- Cloughjordan eco-village is the first of its kind in Ireland under the EU CONCERTO Programme.
- The Council, through a partnership approach is a leader in education and research, including developing the idea for a national 'Energy in Agriculture'⁴ event to promote the low carbon economy in the agricultural sector.
- Limerick Institute of Technology is committed to research and development through its ACORN Research Group and has developed strong links with industry in this respect.

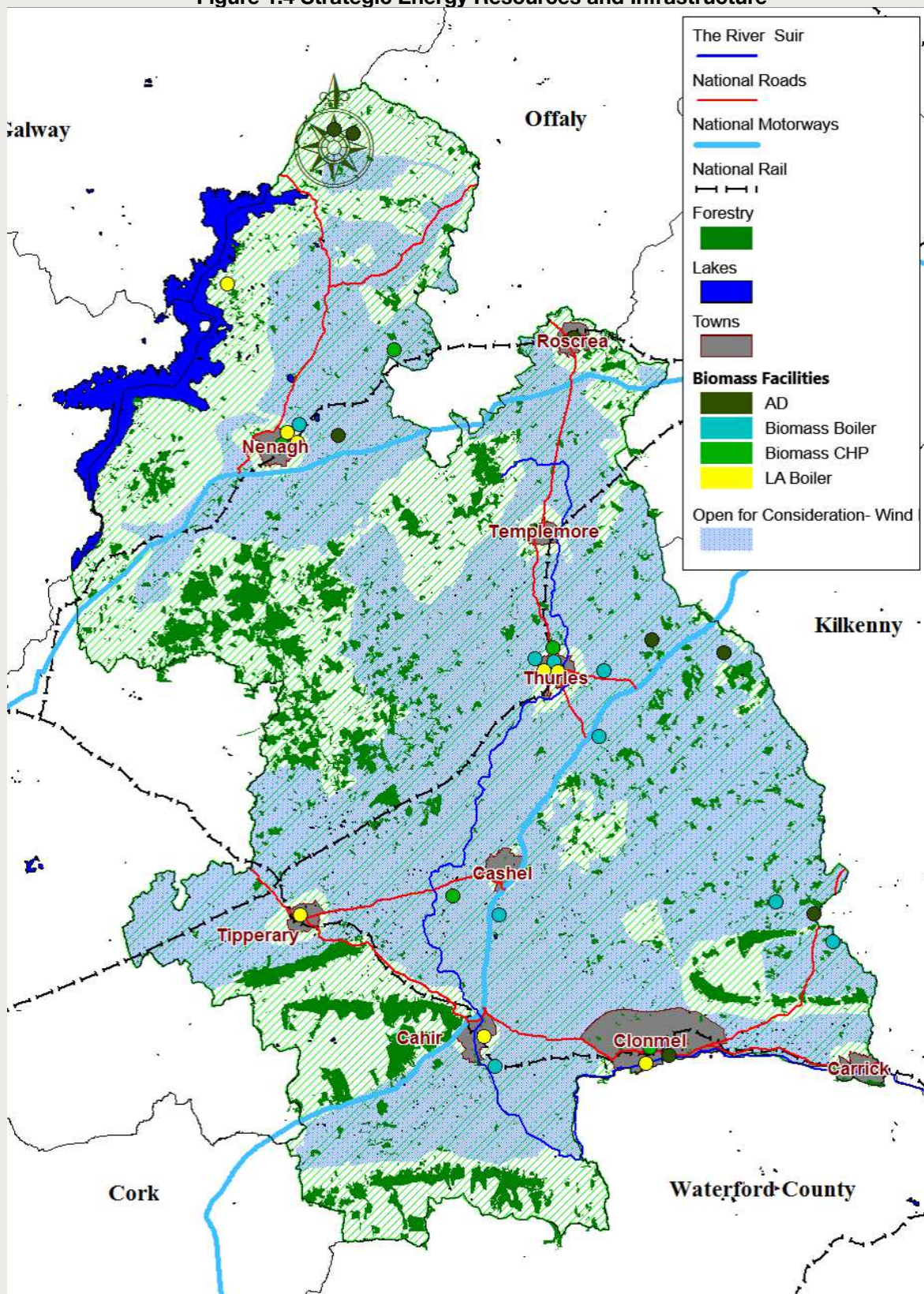


⁴ Teagasc, Tipperary Energy Agency and Gurteen College

Tipperary's Natural Renewable Resources

While Tipperary is already a national contributor to electrical energy from wind, the County has the infrastructure and capacity to develop other forms of renewable energy and respond to changing technologies. For example, the agricultural base of the County would support the development of anaerobic digestion, combined heat and power, bio-energy and bio-technology. Figure 1.4 illustrates a spatial representation of existing strategic energy resources within the county.

Figure 1.4 Strategic Energy Resources and Infrastructure





Ireland's Bio-economy and Tipperary

The Bio-economy may be simply defined as the sustainable use of our natural resources from traditional sectors (e.g. agriculture, forestry and marine) and non-traditional (e.g. food waste) to produce high value products. Natural resources are finite, and the development of the bio-economy is a European response to ensure we meet future global food supply requirements, ensure sufficient supplies of raw materials, energy and industrial products under decreasing fossil resources. The development of bio-economy is supported by the EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Horizon 2020. Ireland's comparative advantages in sustainable bio-resources provide a unique opportunity for Ireland to be a leader of this sector at an international level. Moreover, the EU anticipates that the value of this market could be €45 billion by 2025⁵. This will provide significant opportunities for job creation in rural Ireland where our bio-recourses can be harnessed. The NPF should, in this respect recognize the opportunities, identify the importance and support the development of this sector.

The development of the bio-economy in Ireland requires integrated cooperation between multiple stakeholders i.e. industry, research, policy makers, government agencies, NGOs, consumers, consumer groups, business associations. Tipperary is already leading the way at a national level, in that it has become a 'European Model Demonstrator Region of the Bio-Economy' and as such is a centre to drive research and development of Ireland's new bio-economy.

Strategic Energy Zones and Research and Development

The Council supports the identification of national Strategic Energy Zones as suggested in the Issues Paper. Within Tipperary, there are a number of locations and sites which would be suitable. In particular, the County has a number of strategically located brown field industrial sites, in close proximity to the national transmission network and high capacity motorways. Moreover, Tipperary's agencies, third level institutions and businesses have the knowledge, capacity and human capital to support the further development of this sector. In particular, a 'research and innovation hub' should be a key component of any new Strategic Energy Zone designations.



Ireland's transition to a bio-economy, as aforementioned, requires the development of a national centre of research and innovation to bring together industry, policy makers, academic partners and the local community. A national centre would provide a research and innovation pathway from basic research through to commercial exploitation, and would act as a knowledge base fostering innovation and cooperation and setting Ireland up as an early global leader in this emerging area.

Community Participation and Investment in Energy

The White Paper on Energy has identified that whilst positive citizen participation is key in achieving a low carbon economy, Ireland has to date relied on private sector led development rather than community led development. There is a great opportunity for the NPF to reverse this trend and to drive a new focus in line with Denmark's experience, whereby locally owned renewable energy developments are common place across a range of technology. Community investment policy supports communities to invest in and gain from large scale renewable energy developments. The benefits are clear whereby fossil fuel usage is reduced, energy is produced and used locally, sustainable local employment is created and financial return remains in the community.

The first and only community owned wind farm in the country is located at Templederry, Co. Tipperary and displays the benefits of community led renewable energy developments in providing long term sustainable income to rural communities. Tipperary has also led the way in community energy efficiency retrofitting works in areas such as Drumbane. Such activities provide local jobs, reduce the community's energy use, and increase the economic capacity of communities.

In recognition of the benefits that community investment can bring to local communities, Tipperary County Council recently participated in a research project, funded by the SEAI, entitled '**Legislative Mechanisms for Local Community Ownership and Investment in Renewable Energy Infrastructure**⁶'. This project recommends amendment to the planning policy framework and legislation in order to bring community investment into effect. The Council would welcome an opportunity to discuss this research with the Department and believes the its findings should inform an objective of the NPF.

6 Other partners: Tipperary Energy Agency, Philip Lee Solicitors and Future Analytics



Spatial Planning and District Heating

Ireland has been successful in producing electricity through renewable energy resources however; a significant improvement must be made if we are to achieve EU targets in the Heat Sector. The White Paper on energy has included a commitment to prepare a Heat Strategy, which should examine optimal solutions in meeting heat demands through renewable energy sources in all sectors; transport, residential etc. However, this strategy should be linked to and driven by the NPF, whereby strategic heat planning becomes at consideration at all levels of the planning system; national regional and local. In this respect, a National Spatial Heat Plan is also required which addresses spatial energy demands and options for energy production in our cities, towns and rural area.

This National Spatial Heat Plan should be an objective of the NPF. District heating systems should become part of our heat energy infrastructure in 2040, and Ireland should follow and examine best practice examples in Denmark in terms of how such systems can be developed to best effect at different settlement scales. If District Heating systems are to be successfully deployed, national planning guidelines will need to be prepared and regulatory systems addressed.



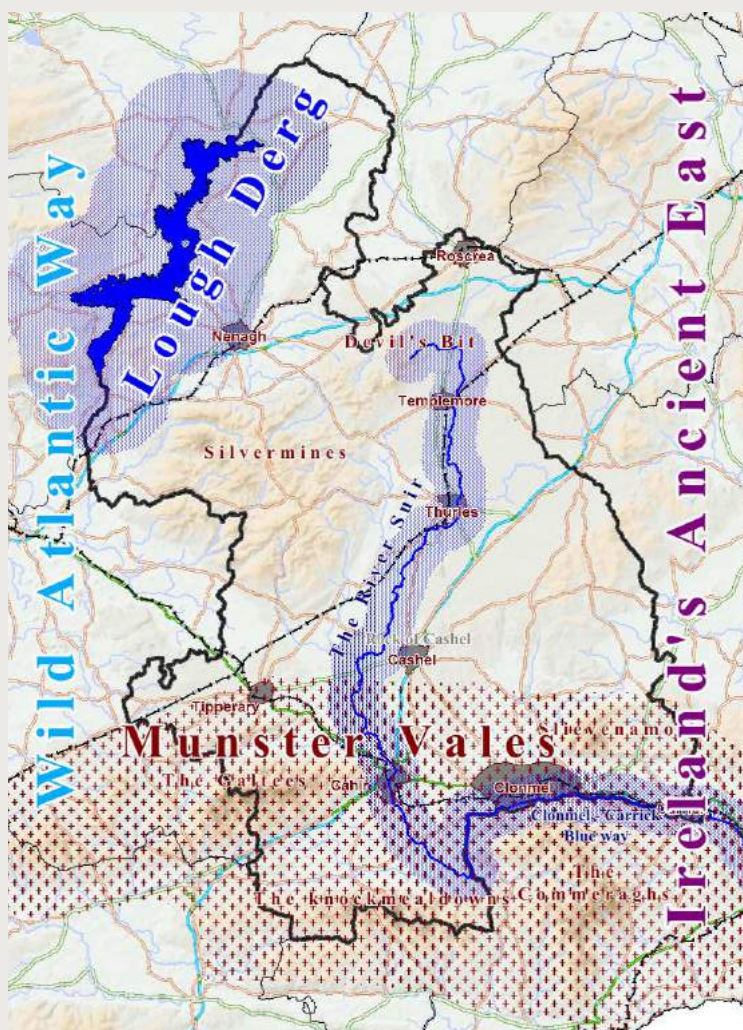


ACTIONS:

- The NPF should support the identification of Strategic Energy Zones in Tipperary, to incorporate research and development and to facilitate the achievement of a secure sustainable energy supply for the country.
- The NPF should recognise European Model Demonstrator Region designation and support the development of the Lisheen site as a centre for research and development in renewable energy and the bio-economy.
- The NPF should recognise Tipperary as a pilot county for the development of alternative sources of energy and for the development of the low carbon economy.
- The NPF should set an objective to prepare National Heat Plan, with the purpose of establishing how Ireland can achieve sustainable heating in cities, towns and rural areas through natural resources and technologies such as District Heating.
- The NPF should include commitment on the development of planning policy that will support community investment in renewable energy development and also community lead approach to better energy efficiency.
- National planning policy on renewable energy development should be prepared to reflect developments in new technologies, solar, bio-energy etc.
- The preparation of a National Landscape Character Assessment should be prioritised, to provide a nationally consistent approach to wind energy strategies.
- The NPF should recognise Tipperary as a pilot county for the development of alternative uses for our peatlands through the use of masterplanning and maximising this valuable natural resource.
- The NPF should recognise the potential of the Silvermines for Pumped Hydro and energy storage.

Tourism is one of Ireland's most important economic sectors, and Fáilte Ireland's destinations plans (Ireland Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way) now provide spatial focus for the development of our national tourism product.

Tipperary benefits from its location in Ireland's Ancient East, at the entry point to Ireland's Lakelands and close to the 'Wild Atlantic Way'. Tipperary has natural and cultural attractions, vibrant towns and villages and contrasting landscapes, all of which are easily accessible to both national and international visitors.



In recognition of the importance of tourism to the County, the Council recently prepared the Tipperary Strategic Tourism Marketing, Experience & Destination Development Plan 2016-2021 and has developed our tourism product. Priority action for the county have included:

- Establishment for the first time of a Tipperary Tourism Company for the overseeing of tourism in the County.



- Operation of the award winning Lough Derg Marketing Group (comprising representatives from the trade / business sector around the lake, Clare, Galway and Tipperary County Councils, Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland, Inland Fisheries Ireland and local development companies) and secured and implemented major projects supported by the Lough Derg Stimulus Fund.
- Secured funding for the marketing and promotion of the 'Munster Vales' (comprising of which include 4 Local authorities of Cork and Tipperary County Councils and Limerick and Waterford City and County Councils, Local Development Companies and community groups)
- Development of the Butler Trail linking Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel and Cahir.
- Development of facilities on and adjacent to the River Suir under INTERREG Green and Blue Futures: The social economy and the management of green infrastructure project.

In order for Tipperary to achieve its full potential and build on the significant work and investment carried out to date, the NPF needs to recognise the contribution of Tipperary in national tourism development and support development of 'hero' projects, the natural blueways of Lough Derg and the Suir, adventure tourism, and greenways and sustainable tourism development.

The NPF also needs to support the development of tourism infrastructure in the private sector. In particular, initiatives to incentivise hotel development in general and specifically in association with strategic tourism projects should be supported.

ACTIONS:

- The NPF should support the development and promotion of Ireland Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way.
- The NPF should identify the Lough Derg/Lakelands and the Munster Vales areas as nationally important locations and support investment in the successful delivery of these destination plans.
- The NPF should promote the towns of Ballina/Killaloe and Nenagh as being the gateway to the Lakelands region of the Country.
- The NPF should acknowledge the need to support hotel development to support the tourism industry and targeted incentives should be put in place to attract such development.
- The NPF should emphasise the historic quarters of our towns and maximise the tourism potential which they offer.

Tipperary benefits from having a range of third level and educational campuses within the County. These include LIT Thurles, LIT Clonmel, St. Patrick's College (Mary Immaculate College) Thurles, Gurteen Agricultural College, the Garda Training College Templemore, together with the ETB.

These third level facilities will continue to meet educational requirements and will expand and develop facilities at their campus locations. Tipperary also benefits from being within a commuting distance of many other third level institutions. As the cost of living in cities increases Tipperary students increasingly have to commute long distances should they wish to attend college outside the County.

Third level institutions, through ICT technologies (video conferencing etc.), are beginning to provide distance learning courses in designated centres. Therefore, there are now opportunities to look at courses which have a rural focus being relocated to rural campuses to maximize the opportunities for rural students to avail of them. This could have wide ranging socio-economic benefits, including affording greater and cost-effective options for education for all sectors of the population.

ACTION:

- The NPF should support the expansion of designated Third Level centres in Tipperary to provide cost effective educational opportunities to all sectors of the population.





The Issues Paper has recognised that the relationship between infrastructure and land use in Ireland has served to reinforce the status quo, whereby infrastructure has followed development and joined up thinking between NSS and other government strategies and investment plans has not taken place.

The new Capital Investment Plan should be led by the NPF, and the Government should optimise the impact of public expenditure through targeted investments in priority social and economic areas where the need is greatest such as in education, health and housing, and supporting economic growth through investments in transport and supporting job creation.

Key priorities for the NPF and the Capital Investment Plan are as follows:

Transport:

— Provision of a new Motorway between Limerick and Waterford (up-grade of N24) and Link to Cork City via Cahir.

This motorway is of vital importance to ensure regional effectiveness, and improve synergies between our regional cities. A motorway on this route would reduce the urgency for direct motorways between Limerick and Cork and Waterford to Cork, saving significant amounts of public monies, maximising existing public infrastructure and creating key connectivity across the Southern Region and between its city regions.

— Provision of the Killaloe Bypass / Shannon Bridge and R494 Improvement&Up-Grade of Nenagh to Thurles Regional Road (R498), provision of Thurles and Tipperary Town by-passes and further improvements to the N52 and N62 National Secondary Roads.

The provision of the above road infrastructure improvements are vital for connectivity within the County and with neighbouring Counties and to the growth and development of Region.



— Rural Road Network

Tipperary rural road network comprises of the majority of our road infrastructure across the county, and maintaining this network to a quality standard needs to be priority in the NPF. The next Capital Investment Plan needs to provide for enhance funding for this nextwork.

— Retention and enhancement of services of the Limerick-Waterford and Nenagh-Ballybrophy Railway Lines.

Tipperary is very well served by the Dublin-Cork-Limerick railway line, which includes an important hub link at Limerick Junction. The County also benefits from rail lines from Limerick to Waterford and Limerick to Ballybrophy. However, services on these rail lines are not operating to their potential and the recent proposal by the National Transport Authority to close the lines⁷ is a matter of grave concern to the Council. These lines provide intra-regional connectivity, which will be necessary to support the development of new City Regions and well as providing services for towns along its network. The NPF must include an objective to retain both these rail links, and service provision should be enhanced and aligned with strategic economic objectives.

— Retention and enhancement of public bus routes serving the rural parts of the County.

Public Bus connectivity between key urban centres including to Dublin and between regional cities must be retained. Additional support is also necessary to expand the local link bus services managed by the Transport Co-ordination Unit in rural area.

⁷ The Role of Rail in Ireland and Funding its Delivery, NTA, 2016



Water Services (Irish Water Investment Plans)

— Provision of waste services infrastructure of our Towns

In order for Tipperary Towns to grow and develop economically, provision need to be made for investment in water services infrastructure on a continued basis to include;

- Clonmel Northern Supply Reservoir
- Nenagh Waste Water Treatment Up-grade.

— Establishment of Rural Settlement Investment Programme to deliver wastewater treatment in rural towns and villages prioritised by County Settlement Hierarchies.

Health:

— Retention of Enhancement of Services at Clonmel and Nenagh Hospitals

Access to hospitals and appropriate medical care is critical for everyone's health and well being. Clonmel and Nenagh hospitals need to be retained within the overall framework for hospital provision. In providing services which would otherwise have to be provided at Regional Hospitals, they prevent overcrowding. Moreover, they provide critical services for their catchment area. The NPF needs to support the retention of, and enhancement of facilities at these centres, to meet the growing needs of our population.

— Provision of Primary Care Centres

Primary health care services need to be prioritised and rolled out as per the original delivery programme and the NPF support their provision in Tipperary's Towns.





Broadband:

— Implementation and Delivery of the National Broadband Plan

The delivery of the National Broadband Plan must be a matter of priority. The Council has commenced work on the rollout of the plan to those 'intervention areas' which are not currently served by commercial operators and this work will need to be continued along with significant investment.

Air:

- The NPF should proactively promote and harness the potential of Shannon Airport's capacity and its motorway connectivity to 40% of the Country's population.
- The NPF should provide for the development of an extended runway at Waterford Airport to deliver regional international connectivity by air and support economic development in the south east region.



The Elected Members of Tipperary County Council are anxious for the County of Tipperary to play an important part in the future of Ireland and believe that Tipperary can play a key role in “Ireland 2040 – Our Plan.”

We believe that Tipperary County, it’s Council, communities, citizens, businesses and voluntary organisations have the vision, capacity, track record and drive to contribute positively to achieving the goals and ambitions of the National Planning Framework.

Tipperary County has been reunited into a single entity and has demonstrated that by working together, a positive, modern Council can achieve and exceed targets which are given to it.

Tipperary looks forward to delivering under Ireland 2040 – Our Plan, through our Corporate Vision - “Tipperary Together: Ambitious for our communities, demanding of ourselves and working to a shared purpose to deliver prosperity across the county”.





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