

Project Ireland 2040: INMO cautiously welcomes health commitments in National Development Plan

Project Ireland 2040 comprises the National Planning Framework which sets out a spatial strategy for Ireland which will be backed by the National Development Plan. Together these make up the Government's vision for Ireland over the next 20 years. The strategy includes infrastructural spending in transport, health, education, housing and measures to tackle climate change.

The Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) has cautiously welcomed the health elements of today's National Development Plan announcement.

"The commitment to 2,600 acute beds plus an addition 4,500 community beds is entirely dependent on significant reform of our health services," said Phil Ni Sheaghda, INMO general secretary.

"Beds alone will not meet the demand and unless the pay and terms and conditions of nurses and midwives are properly addressed in the Public Service Pay Commission Report, the ability to attract and keep nurses and midwives in the Irish public health service will continue to be a major impediment to the delivery of appropriate safe care."

The INMO are seeking early meetings with the Department of Health and the HSE to progress the health elements of the National Development Plan to discuss staffing implications for nurses and midwives.



Peter McVerry Trust welcomes 'big and ambitious capital plan'

The Peter McVerry Trust has welcomed the "big and ambitious capital plan" announced by the Government today, in particular its goal of 550,000 new homes by 2040.

CEO of the Trust Pat Doyle said: "People will know that the single biggest legacy of the crash was the lack of funds available to invest in social housing and other important areas. This plan provides a long term vision to invest in housing and other critical areas such as education which ultimately will have a positive impact on efforts to tackle homelessness.

"We strongly welcome the commitment to deliver future housing supply based on housing need, through the creation of a new Housing Need and Demand survey. This survey will hopefully ensure that there is more 1 and 2 bedroom units built in urban areas to reflect the need for these types of units, particularly amongst those in homeless services and those in the rental system."

"We believe the broad priorities and principles on which the Government commits to future housing policy are a progressive move. Things like committing to ensuring better re-use empty buildings and put to use smaller derelict sites in urban areas."

He added that one of the most important measures in the plan was the creation of a National Development and Regeneration Agency, which he said had the potential "to be a game changer in land use in Ireland".



Exporters welcome National Development Plan's investment in transport and broadband

The Irish Exporters Association (IEA) has welcomed the National Development Plan saying it hoped the plan would provide balanced growth across the country.

IEA boss Simon McKeever said: "We today welcome the launch of Project Ireland 2040 with the hope that the ambitious targets set out in this plan will be achieved and provide all citizens of Ireland the opportunity to maximise on the country's potential with a balance of growth across the country."

The Irish Exporters Association lobbied Government on the development of the National Planning Framework particularly in the areas of: Brexit; regional road connectivity; international connectivity in ports and airports; multimodal transport; and broadband.

In a statement, the IEA said that regional development of the country was imperative to maintain business and attract investment, adding the plan to 'Brexit-proof' the country would need investment in transport links including road, rail, air and sea ports.

The IEA particularly welcomed:

- €2bn Urban Regeneration and Development fund to maintain sustainable growth in Ireland's five cities and other large urban centres and the establishment of the National Regeneration Agency;
- €1bn Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to support growth in towns, villages and outlying rural areas;
- Delivery of the National Broadband Strategy to ensure fast, secure, high capacity and reliable digital connectivity, although how this will be delivered remains to be seen
- Focus on international connectivity including a new runway for Dublin Airport, continued development of Cork and Shannon Airports, investment in Ireland West Airport Knock, and for smaller airports under the Regional Airports Programme, major development of Dublin, Cork, Shannon-Foynes and other ports, as well as investment in transport connectivity to ports



Conradh na Gaeilge says plan will create 1,000 jobs a year in Gaeltacht areas

Conradh na Gaeilge has said investments included in the National Development Plan (NDP) mean extra support will be provided to children and childcare in Gaeltacht areas, and that Údarás na Gaeltachta's budget to create jobs will be raised from €7m to €12m, creating about 1,000 jobs a year.

The body also welcomed the plan for an Irish language and cultural centre in Dublin city.

Conradh na Gaeilge president Niall Comer said: "These are suggestions that were made in an investment plan supported by 90 Irish language and Gaeltacht organisations, who deserve credit for the campaigning and hard work they have done to date."

Development plan: 'They could and should have gone further', says Green Party

The Green Party leader Eamon Ryan has said the National Development Plan does not go far enough, and lacks substance.

€22bn is set aside for measures to tackle climate change, including plans to ban all non-zero emissions cars by 2030 and changing bus fleets to hybrids, and €500m to incentivise people to become more climate friendly by upgrading their homes and cars.

"It's good we have the money to spend, and are planning ahead and thinking ahead," Mr Ryan said.

"My concern is what they are saying they want to achieve is not targeted enough, in saying how the money will be spent - they could and should have gone further."



Development plan: Irish Planning Institute asks 'have we learned from the past?'

The Irish Planning Institute (IPI) has welcomed as "mature" today's launch of a national planning strategy aligned with investment, but added: "Today's announcement raises more questions than gives answers about our ability to learn from our past".

President of the body representing Ireland's planners, Joe Corr, said: "The framework proposed today sets out four cities and five towns outside Dublin as growth centres. That is one more than the eight gateway cities in the Spatial Strategy of 2002. The evidence of the past 15 years is that this didn't work."

"...From a professional planning perspective 'Ireland 2040' is not following the evidence as we hoped it would...to shape and enable future investment in the growth of our society and its economy... It presents as a framework for politics following politics rather development following planning."

However, he also said: "We welcome and endorse the leadership which the NPF provides. As a framework it leaves ample scope for addressing local needs in an active and informed way."

The IPI said it would like to see assurances that funds for rural area development go to regeneration of essential physical and social infrastructure in villages and small towns and not on rural roads "which encourages further one-off housing, for example".



Development Plan reaction: Fianna Fáil says plan includes 179 old projects

Fianna Fáil has accused the Government of repackaging dozens of previously announced projects and passing it off as a new national development strategy, after the launch today of Project Ireland 2040.

Fianna Fáil Spokesperson on Public Expenditure and Reform Dara Calleary said the plan contains at least 179 previously announced projects and more than €40bn of funding which was already earmarked for infrastructure initiatives.

He said: "Today's 'launch' is nothing more than a major marketing campaign designed to promote a government which has failed to meet its own targets to date. Major projects being unveiled as part of the NDP such as Metro Link and additional social housing provision were already included in the previous capital plan, but just haven't been delivered on.

"Like so many previous action plans, this one looks good on paper, but the real test is in the delivery...The National Broadband Plan was launched to much fanfare in 2011, yet there are more than half a million homes and businesses which will not have high speed access before 2023. The Rebuilding Ireland Plan, which promised over 3,000 direct builds in 2017 delivered fewer than 1,000 homes.

"The Taoiseach and his Cabinet Ministers need to realise that all the marketing and spin available to them cannot hide the fact that they are moving the goalposts and still missing the targets. This plan only serves to highlight all of the previous strategies they have failed to deliver on.

"Instead of undertaking grand launches in Sligo, this government needs to start investing in Sligo and across the regions. The only barometer on which this plan can be assessed is delivery."



€22bn set aside for climate-change measures 'starts journey to low-carbon economy'

Sustainable Nation Ireland CEO Stephen Nolan today welcomed a €22bn package of measures to create a low-carbon, competitive, climate-resilient economy by 2050, including €7.6bn in government funding, and €14.2bn in private investment by 2027.

A €500m Climate Action Fund was also announced, to help pay for projects and initiatives that cut across transport, energy efficiency, renewable energy, research and agriculture.

Mr Nolan said: “Today’s plan is a very important starting point in Ireland’s journey towards a low-carbon, climate-friendly economy that will benefit all of our people.

“The measures outlined today and the recognition of how much capital is required by 2027, can only help to increase investments in technologies, innovations and climate-aligned enterprises that will create jobs and prosperity – but in a much cleaner way.”

Sustainable Nation Ireland is the not-for-profit body tasked in the Government’s IFS2020 Strategy with promoting and developing Ireland as a hub for green finance and sustainable business and promoting climate-linked innovation in business.



National Development Plan reaction: Labour says 'just another cock-up'

Labour's spokesperson on Housing and Local Government Jan O'Sullivan has said the legal framework to deliver the National Development Plan is not in place, and the validity of the plan is therefore in question.

“National Planning Strategies are hugely important for any country. They shape the future and determine where money is spent for the overall good of the people.

“How can this plan be on a statutory basis if it is agreed and published before the law to put it on a statutory basis is passed? Government must clarify this, or the validity of the plan to underpin decisions and spending for the next 20 years is built on sand.

“This plan has been three years in the making with two sets of public consultation and numerous submissions and discussions around the country. There are background documents that provide the evidence base for its priorities.

“But, during the past two weeks the whole thing has been turned on its head because ministers ran scared of making choices in the national interest. The crying shame is that the validity of the plan is now questionable.

“This could have been avoided by taking the few weeks needed to complete the enactment of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016 which includes in Section 8 the requirement that a draft of the Plan should be approved by both Houses of the Oireachtas along with the accompanying Environment Report and Appropriate Assessment Report.”



Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland: Quality the key

The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) has welcomed the National Planning Framework (NPF), saying investment in quality architecture and urban design will have a positive impact on the economy "as well as the health and wellbeing of Ireland's citizens".

In a statement, the group said: "In planning for the future, we must be both ambitious and realistic to ensure that public projects deliver guaranteed sustainable and long term value...It is imperative that procurement, planning and regulatory systems are focused on championing quality in the built environment that positions Ireland as a leader in international best practice in sustainable, quality, value driven development."

The RIAI said the National Development Regeneration Authority, Regional Authorities and Local Authorities should be resourced to ensure "a controlled and phased flow of investment through the life of the NPF to deliver infrastructure to support thriving towns, cities and villages and vibrant urban living for the expanding population".