



**CHAMBERS
IRELAND**
IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS

“Set out, in order of priority, the principal policy areas for the NPF to address, in order to effect change”.

Drive Regional Economic Development

A primary focus of the National Planning Framework must be to facilitate and support the effective and sustainable economic growth of Ireland’s regions.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the successful economic development of Ireland’s regions is dependent on how effectively we leverage our cities as the drivers of regional growth. The NPF can support a strategy that ensures that each region can harness its distinctiveness and unique assets and comparative advantage to drive growth.

The National Planning Framework must set out a clear strategy for regional economic development based on the concept of each region fulfilling its full potential for economic growth. An approach that recognises the individual distinctness and

It will be important that economic development planning is not seen as a zero-sum game with one area or region gaining at the expense of another. The role of cities and towns and their interrelationship within a regional ecosystem should be clearly delineated and articulated within the Framework.

Promote Strategic Investment

The Framework must identify priority infrastructure projects and attempt to set an optimal sequence for investment. With constrained resources available for capital investment relative to our national requirements for the foreseeable future, the Framework has an important role to play in setting out national priorities for our future infrastructure investment.

The benefits of the Framework identifying strategically important infrastructure projects will not simply be in terms ensuring that the right investment decisions are made and that value for money is achieved, it will be an important component in aiding public acceptance of project location and impacts.

By clearly articulating a national perspective on what infrastructure and investment is required and where it needs to be located, the Framework will help build public trust and social support amongst citizens and communities for nationally important infrastructure.

Enhancing Coordination and Integration

The National Planning Framework provides an opportunity to support more effective regional, national and indeed all-island coordination and integration amongst a wide array of stakeholders.

The NPF and its implementation or oversight group should endeavour to draw together, at a high level, regional and national strategies that may in the past have been implemented in isolation. These should include strategies on economic development, environmental protection and sustainability, decarbonisation, transport and energy infrastructure, broadband, flood defence and cross border cooperation.

While recognising that the NPF itself must be a focused and concise document, as an overarching Framework it has the potential to strategically tie together disparate strategies and policies that may previously have been disjointed in design and implementation.

Governance and Implementation

We fully support the importance of developing a vision for the NPF, however it must ultimately be practically implementable. In order for the NPF to truly effect change, significant emphasis must be placed on developing a robust governance and implementation structure. We fully support the necessity for the NPF to be placed on a statutory footing, but there must also be an ongoing mechanism to ensure that the NPF is adhered to and delivered over the coming years.

Without a robust system to ensure ongoing compliance and adherence to the Framework, it risks becoming just another document to be referenced in the preamble of future development plans or spatial strategies. A system of both incentives and sanctions will be required to ensure that the framework proves itself effective in shaping Ireland's future.

The NPF must also be flexible enough to be capable of responding to evolving scenarios and new evidence. Evaluating the efficacy of the Framework at regular intervals in terms of outcomes rather than adherence to processes will help ensure that strategic aims are being met.