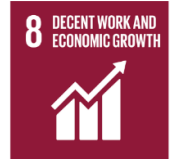




**Chambers
Ireland**
Advancing business together



Review of the National Development Plan

Submission by Chambers Ireland

June 2025

About Chambers Ireland

Chambers Ireland is an all-island business organisation with a unique geographical reach. Our members are the Chambers of Commerce in the cities and towns throughout the country – active in every constituency. Each of our member Chambers is central to their local business community and all seek to promote thriving local economies that can support sustainable cities and communities.

Our Perspective

While our GDP growth is estimated to be 3.7% in 2025¹, Ireland currently stands at 38th in terms of basic infrastructure availability according to the European Commission's 2025 Country Report². This contrast reveals a striking imbalance between economic output and the foundational systems needed to support it. Looking ahead, the situation is even more critical considering our growing population³. It is essential we reverse this trend and plan for the future.

The widespread lack of infrastructure delivery is significantly hindering our competitiveness. Chambers Ireland and its affiliated Chamber Network stand united in advocating that core infrastructure – leading with transport, water and energy – are the defining infrastructural shortcomings of the past 10 years which have had a profound knock-on impact on housing.

Simply put, failure to deliver means we fail generations of communities who will be at a competitive disadvantage compared to their peers in other countries. Delivery must happen now without delay and without hesitation.

The review of the National Development Plan (NDP) should be undertaken in the following terms:

- a) **Delivery**
- b) **Accountability**

Our message is simple: there must be an understanding at all levels of Government that non-delivery of our key infrastructure puts a straitjacket on every other critical growth area as well. Without urgency, transparency and a shared national vision, the NDP risks becoming a checklist of missed opportunities.

We remain committed to working with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the Plan is expedited.

¹ https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-economic-outlook-volume-2025-issue-1_83363382-en/full-report/ireland_d753c3b0.html#:~:text=GDP%20growth%20was%20robust%20in,would%20improve%20the%20investment%20climate

² https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/7ec5fe18-b881-4140-b86a-7b22cb7a8580_en?filename=IE_CR_SWD_2025_207_1_EN_autre_document_travail_service_part1_v3.pdf&cldee=sh3GS0FuknQ6VoTxt33ZA7JQKRmN4FtG0G_pBfW6p1w7bWfKbcSy43zxJ15A_YtOTAA_pEtLrhkwagWFMG33QA&recipientid=contact-baa265b900fae71180fd3863bb3600d8-847a2da0d64e438ba4c3702fb3daf293&esid=6580d4aa-f142-f011-877a-000d3a2e674d

³ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-plfp/populationandlabourforceprojections2023-2057/>

a) Delivery

The State's ability to grow sustainably is fundamentally constrained by the continued failure to deliver key infrastructure, including housing and regional connectivity. For growth to be inclusive and futureproof, accessibility must lead the way; not lag behind. Yet, the delivery of critical infrastructure is being stalled by excessive bureaucracy and red tape which undermines our potential to meet the demands of our growing population.

Transport & Connectivity

- There is strong potential to develop a network of interconnected cities on the island of Ireland.
- Airports must be integrated into national connectivity strategies, including rail links to key airports.
- Regional rail links require urgent attention.
- Investment in critical road infrastructure (e.g. inter-city routes) should be expedited.
- Cross-border cooperation and infrastructure, including economic corridors, must be reinforced.
- Flood defences are essential for regional resilience.

Utilities & Environment

- Our electricity grid requires upgrading and reinforcement particularly in supporting renewable energy and new developments.
- Water and wastewater infrastructure is wholly inadequate and stalling development across regions.
- Offshore wind potential remains underutilised throughout the State.
- Key projects need to be expedited urgently, including the Greater Dublin Drainage Project and the Water Supply Project for the Eastern and Midlands Region.
- Uisce Éireann requires multiannual ringfenced funding to expedite delivery.
- Port redevelopment should be prioritised.

Housing

- Housing delivery is far below its targets, with an over-reliance on the private sector and a critical shortage of key infrastructure to support it.
- Adequate and timely funding of local authorities will be critical in the supply of housing.
- Vacant housing stock must be activated and brought into use without delay.

Economic Development

- Investment should be equitably shared across all regions of the State.

- Commercial development space is lacking in many urban centres.
- Access to finance and short-term delivery mechanisms are required to support regional growth.

b) Accountability

Perfection is the enemy of progress and decisions must be made to enable delivery. We are calling for accountability to ensure that actions are underway that match the commitments in the original National Development Plan.

Governance & Oversight

- Alignment of all stakeholders in delivering critical infrastructure should be prioritised.
- Greater co-ordination, transparency and urgency from all departments is required in terms of capital delivery.
- The original capital focus of the NDP to guide long-term investment in infrastructure and public services to support sustainable economic growth and regional development, should be preserved.
- Local authorities report delays in funding and approvals which undermines their ability to deliver.
- There should be an overarching economic vision for project delivery that also leverages regional comparative advantages.

Policy & Planning

- The National Planning Framework's goal of balanced regional development should guide the review of the NDP.
- Efforts to enhance the integration of border regions should be actively prioritised and advanced.
- Reviews and approvals of local development plans should be expedited.

Strategic Investment

- Adequate investment should be allocated to infrastructure development if we are to realise the objectives of the NDP and the National Planning Framework.