

City Regions

IRELAND



Cork Chamber
Advancing business together



DUBLIN CHAMBER



Galway Chamber
Ag cothú gnó le chéile



Limerick Chamber
Advancing business together



Waterford Chamber
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City Regions Ireland

CITY REGIONS IRELAND COMPRISES OF CORK CHAMBER, DUBLIN CHAMBER, LIMERICK CHAMBER, WATERFORD CHAMBER AND GALWAY CHAMBER, ALL MEMBERS OF CHAMBERS IRELAND.

5 CITIES - 8 PRINCIPLES - A SHARED VOICE

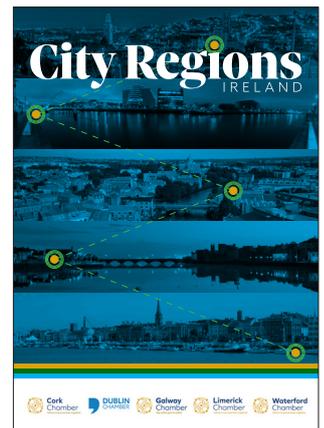
The 5 City Regions of Cork, Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Waterford are Ireland's engines for sustainable economic growth and have been identified as such by Government planning in the National Planning Framework (NPF), Ireland 2040. The Chambers of Commerce in the 5 city regions have come together in recognition that the nation's urban centres share similar challenges and aspirations.

Population growth is a significant challenge, as well as an opportunity, with growth of 20-25% for Dublin and 50-60% for Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford targeted in the National Planning Framework (NPF). To achieve these targets in a sustainable way, Government must invest in infrastructure in these cities and support their proper planning and development. While the 5 cities are in different stages of their development, a common set of challenges and opportunities for growth are shared.

The NPF sets out a series of objectives for the 5 cities, including targets and guidelines for infrastructure, centres of commerce, public realm and housing in densely populated urban cores to support projected population growth. These targets need to be reached for the 5 cities to compete internationally and to serve their regions to reach their potential. If these targets are to be reached in the stated NPF timeline, there needs to be prompt decision making and action across all areas of development, and, complete commitment to the goals from all Government departments.

In one voice, the 5 cities have identified a set of 8 principal areas of focus spanning infrastructure, housing, and planning to inform policy making, maximise growth, and tackle the common issues and opportunities in our urban areas.

CITY REGIONS IRELAND BRINGS TOGETHER IRELAND'S 5 CITIES OF CORK, DUBLIN, GALWAY, LIMERICK AND WATERFORD IN ONE VOICE TO FURTHER THE URBAN AGENDA.





PRINCIPLES

1

Plan for Core Density & Reduce Urban Sprawl

Improving core density and reducing urban sprawl is an imperative for the goal of an economically and socially vibrant city centre.

Currently, urban sprawl is an issue for Ireland's cities and a concerted effort is needed for its prevention. In the past, cities have experienced urban sprawl for a variety of reasons. Into the future, our cities require clear regulatory guidelines and measures to concentrate and enhance viability of high density brownfield development. City and spatial planning with compact growth targets will achieve this. Local authorities need to be on board with this message and treat density as a goal. NPF National Policy Objective 3b sets the target of 50% of new homes to 2050 for the 5 cities to be within existing built up footprints.

Similarly, further development of areas already within the reaches of existing and planned transport links and local amenities is essential for those developments to be sustainable.

Utilising brownfield sites is an imperative to achieving core density in cities. Each of the 5 cities has a limited amount of available land for development or redevelopment within the urban centre. We must use our available land to its best possible capacity within existing city footprints in order to meet the compact growth targets set by the NPF. The delivery of density to these sites must be supported in an all of government approach.

There needs to be an overall change in the planning process on all levels toward improved expediency and clarity in decision making. Furthermore, development projects for housing in urban areas that have been identified as suitable for redevelopment need to be acted on efficiently and in a transparent planning process.

The proposed Government guidelines for Urban Development and Building Height would be a welcome change for the city planning process as they remove many of the current impediments to strategic city planning. The draft guidelines give local authorities minimum capacity requirements for greenfield sites and this should be supported. Crucially, the guidelines also give local authorities a mandate to seek sites that would be suitable for buildings of increased height, thus working towards compact growth targets¹.

The current planning application process is not fit for purpose for effective and timely city planning and development. Blockages in the system with little to no explanation around decision making and timeline delays have a negative impact on urban areas. In the past, the planning process has caused delays and confusion and has the power to impact private sector investment in a development project. The planning process needs to be open, consultative, streamlined, transparent, and timely in nature in order for it to best serve its purpose.

¹ Urban Development and Building Height Draft Guidelines. August 2018

https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/draft_urban_development_and_building_heights_guidelines.pdf



2

Increase housing supply

Housing is an issue across all 5 cities, for Waterford, Galway, Limerick, Cork and Dublin. Rent and house prices have become unaffordable for many. Reports show that rents have increased by 87% in Dublin and 68% in the other cities since the economic crash¹.

Homelessness is at crisis point and tends to occur in urban centres as this is where amenities and homeless services tend to be. Currently, 68% of the homeless population is in Dublin² with the other cities experiencing comparatively high numbers.

We need substantially more housing in our urban centres. The Department of Housing has a target to provide/build 45,000 new homes in the 5 cities to 2020³. We need a mix of housing, including affordable, social and rental, to suit our demographics now and into the future in our cities. Projected population growth across the 5 cities is ambitious.

RENTS HAVE INCREASED BY 87% IN DUBLIN AND 68% IN THE OTHER CITIES SINCE THE ECONOMIC CRASH

We need to build substantially more homes to accommodate this population growth.

Our urban centres need more one and two bed units, apartments being the best option. The aforementioned change in building height regulations and requirements for planning authorities to actively pursue height in areas for development has the power to create urban homes that will accommodate city living.

Planning in relation to housing also needs to reflect the population and demographic requirements of cities, and recognise the stage in development of each particular city.

Similarly, our urban centres need to be able to house their student populations. We need a commitment to building and investing in modern, purpose built student accommodation at a rental price catering to the average student budget.

1 Daft.ie Q2 2018 Rent Report <https://www.daft.ie/report>

2 Homelessness Data July 2018 <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/homeless>

3 Press Release Minister Eoghan Murphy publishes analyses on the cost of delivering housing in Ireland. April 2018

https://merrionstreet.ie/en/NewsRoom/Releases/Minister_Eoghan_Murphy_publishes_analyses_on_the_cost_of_delivering_housing_in_Ireland.html



3

Support International Connectivity through our Ports and Airports

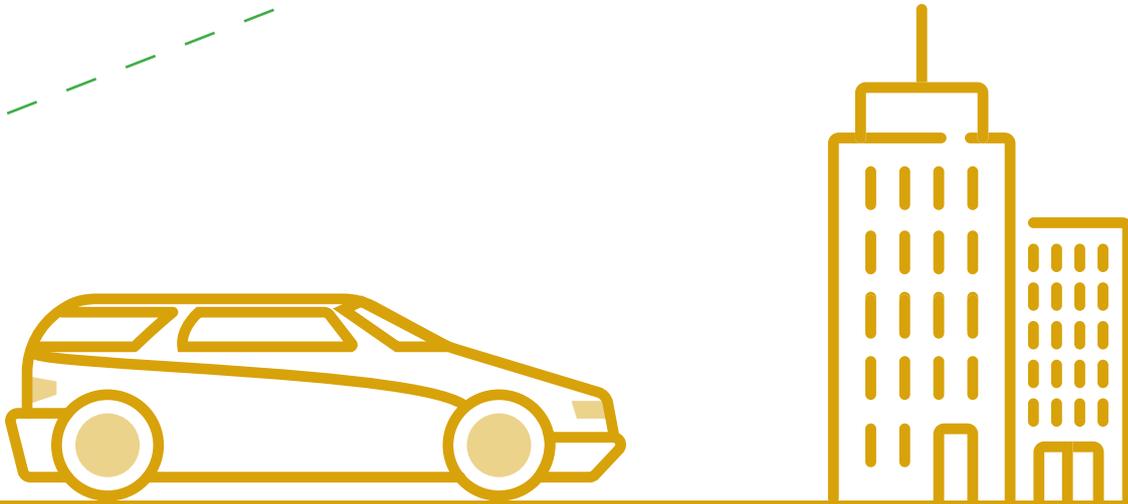
As an island, Ireland has natural resources that serve as an opportunity for economic development. Our cities' ports are a prime example for facilitating trade, tourism and industry.

A port is a vital international connection; the ports located in cities need to be classed as Tier 1 nationally. Investment must be made to ensure that they are of the Tier 1 standard as set by the NPF.

While some of our ports are ahead in relation to bulk imports, others in pharmaceuticals and others for tourism, they are all hubs of activity for their cities. However, without the necessary investment in supporting transport infrastructure the nation's key ports will not serve to their full potential.

Similarly, our airports are essential for attracting both international and national enterprise to locate in a region and enable Irish business to go global.

Investing in the capacity of the 5 cities' central airports and regional airports in service of a city, including in runways and working to open new routes for ease of connectivity is essential to attract both foreign and domestic industry to establish in our cities.



4

Develop Transport Infrastructure to Connect our Cities

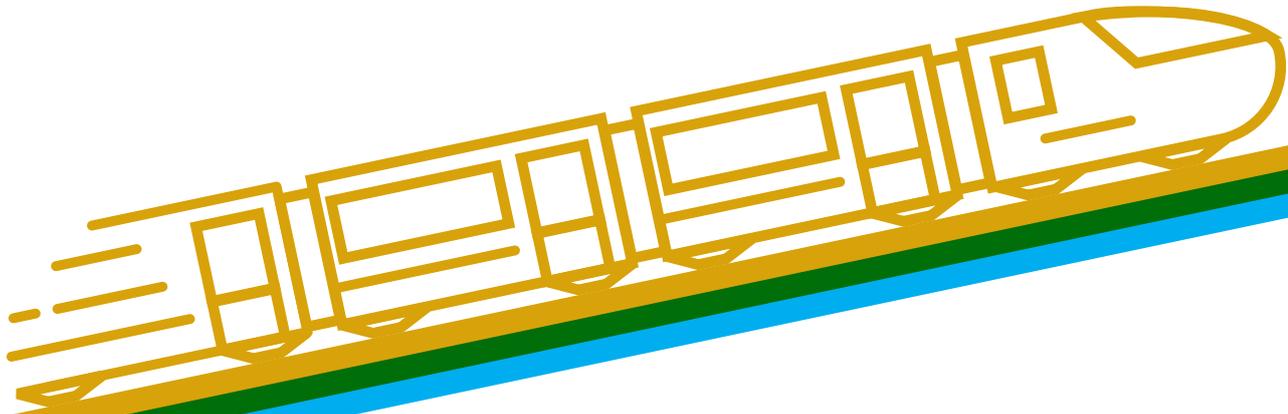
Investing in inter-city transport links will foster greater economic collaboration between Ireland's cities, as well as greater links for tourism.

Currently, both road and rail intercity connections are in need of significant investment.

Rail connections between the major cities are either too slow or non-existent. **Upgrades to the national rail system are needed for better inter-city connectivity.** High speed rail connecting our city regions should be actively examined on the national agenda.

Major interconnecting roads to better connect the entire Southern region are sorely lacking. **As the economic engines of their regions, the cities need to have direct road and rail connection to one another.** The NPF recognises that this connectivity is necessary for cities to work in partnership and improve their offering to act as viable investment locations¹. Achieving this vision will need significant commitment to transport infrastructure.

1 National Planning Framework (NPF) February 2018 p22 <http://npf.ie/project-ireland-2040-national-planning-framework/>



5

Invest in Public Transport

The improvement of public transport links is essential for our cities to be internationally competitive and to attract talent and innovation in a global market.

Public transport systems need modernisation, with the goal to improve or introduce an electric offering across the 5 cities. Traffic congestion inhibits growth and quality of life in our urban centres. Meanwhile, efficient and attractive public transport is the best incentive to reducing dependency on cars.

Public transport routes connecting essential parts of a city have a positive impact on local businesses and social inclusion, retailers, restaurants etc. as well as tourism to areas of local interest.

The NPF recognises the importance of the liveability of our cities to make them stand out on an international stage as cities of scale with integrated communities, and for their citizens to have a good quality standard of living and well-being¹. The accessibility and commutability of a city through public transport is crucial to this objective.

Environmental sustainability is and should be a concern for our urban centres. Enhanced public transport systems is essential in reducing damaging emissions and reaching environmental targets.



6

Create Destinations of Higher Education

Each of our cities needs to be home to the best in third level education that the country can offer.

For our cities to thrive, be innovative, forward thinking and vibrant we must ensure their institutions of higher education are of the best standards. Considerable investment in the overall capacity of our universities, and in capital equipment and upgrading of laboratories and research facilities is necessary. **Higher Education Institutions with capabilities for research and innovation have the power to attract new industries and investment to a city, and, have the power to create new indigenous industry.**

A student population adds to a city, making it dynamic and contributing to the local economy. In order for this to be of most benefit, our third level institutions need investment in public transport so they can be well connected to the rest of the urban area.



7

Rejuvenate our City Centres

City centres need to be vibrant, economically, culturally and socially. City centres need a mix of retail, office, residential, green spaces and public realm and to be well connected through a public transport system. They need to be attractive, safe and vibrant, by day and by night.

Key areas of the public realm within city centres need to be appropriately funded for rejuvenation to improve liveability, encourage tourism and consumer activity.

Sites for mixed use development within the city centre that have clear regional support and, in many cases, have achieved public sector investor interest, need to be considered for investment and approved promptly by Government.

Measures to rejuvenate city centres and develop a vibrant atmosphere should include tapping into the potential of residential apartments above shop fronts, this also would have the welcome impact of providing much needed additional urban housing.



8

Manage Water and Waste

For our cities to be sustainable we need to manage water and waste.

Our city regions are defined by their links to both waterways and ocean and it is essential that we enhance and protect our natural environment and reinforce our infrastructure, creating better places to live, work and play.

The water supply to our cities is in need of investment and sustainable solutions. Our water system has suffered from underinvestment and our cities are now operating at a high water capacity with demand in the capital due to exceed supply by 2026¹. In many cases, cities are operating with much of their supply coming from one source. This then leaves them vulnerable to shortages.

It is also essential that we remove sewage from our harbours and rivers, ensuring that we not only eliminate current unconscionable deficiencies but proactively prepare for our future.

If our cities are to support industry and population growth our water supply, wastewater and sewage treatment systems need investment.

Waste management systems need to be fit for purpose and need to be forward thinking in approach for the future needs of our cities. Investment in moving towards a more circular economy with our waste management is essential.

¹ Water Supply Project www.watersupplyproject.ie/projecthistory



Going forward

Going forward, for sustainability and to optimise potential growth, Government must focus on delivering targets for the 8 principles detailed above. The urban agenda for the 5 cities needs to...



Make city planning for core density and adequate housing a priority



Connect our cities, nationally and internally, through public transport, to an internationally competitive level



Invest in our international connections, air and sea



Make our cities vibrant and innovative through our institutes of higher education and by rejuvenating our centres



Ready our cities for current and future resource issues by investing in waste and water management solutions



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IRELAND

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