

CORK 2050

REALISING THE FULL POTENTIAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CORK'S SUBMISSION TO
THE NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK
MARCH 2017



Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council

Cork 2050

Cork 2050 will deliver growth through a focus on:

- Spatial Strategy
- Place - Making
- Economic Growth
- Connectivity
- County Towns, Villages, Rural Areas & Islands
- Sustainability

Introduction

Cork 2050 is a Joint Submission by Cork County Council and Cork City Council to the National Planning Framework (NPF).

The Strategy seeks to maximise the opportunities and address the challenges that Ireland will face over the coming decades, as detailed in the NPF Issues and Choices Paper. It provides a strategic roadmap for a future that takes into consideration health and well-being, community and place-making, economic and population growth, environmental stewardship and sustainability.

The 'whole of Cork' approach will maximise the resource that is Metropolitan Cork, including Cork City, as well as the County Towns, Villages, Rural Areas and Islands by building on strengths and addressing issues that limit opportunities.

Sustainable principles are embedded in all of the actions set out herein, with recognition that an adaptable economy is required, and that appropriate skills and education support infrastructure is crucial. The need to embrace advances in technology cascades through Cork 2050 - a Strategy that places Cork as a 'First Mover' internationally.

Cork's proven track record for strategic planning, consensus building and capacity to deliver the required economic and population growth will make policy support for escalated growth in Cork a 'game changer'. Cork is the 'Right Place at the Right Time' to drive 'Effective Regional Development' for future generations.

The Strategy has represented an opportunity to create a meaningful statement of Cork's national and regional role in 2050; it is built on a platform of participation and engagement and offers a clear, consensual Vision for Cork's long-term development.

Ireland 2040 – Our Plan

Many of the principal actions of the Strategy will have been implemented or significantly advanced by 2040. However, the longer horizon of 2050 will ensure Cork is well positioned to maximise gains into the future.

The Strategy is being submitted to the NPF as a cohesive and evidence-based approach to the future development of Cork. Its actions and outcomes align with the core objectives of Ireland 2040—Our Plan, and addresses the challenges of uneven distribution and will make a difference to Ireland's development.

The Cork 'differential' is available capacity at a critical time nationally - to relieve pressure on Dublin and drive growth in the Southern Region. Cork is, today, the best location nationally capable of:

Achieving a critical mass within the Metropolitan area with in excess of 500,000 people by 2050.

Creating up to 120,000 jobs over the next 33 years.

Supporting high capacity public transport corridors of a scale that underpins high levels of sustainable economic and population growth (87% of the Metropolitan population living within 1km of public transport services).

Facilitating growth through significant existing infrastructure capacity, and supplemented by committed upgrades and a programme of investment up to 2050 (including water, power, transport, ICT).

The unique Cork offer is further distinguished by a globally recognised quality of place and highly productive economy, supported by an adaptive learning environment capable of skilling and re-skilling as a platform for growth.

In line with European trends for similar locations, Cork will experience significant growth over the coming years, building on its comparative advantages, capacity and regional role. In support of the aforementioned, this submission provides an evidence base for the following:

National Policy support for:

- Population growth at an escalated level to avoid business-as-usual, with 850,000 people by 2050, and a Metropolitan Area of over 500,000, with a vibrant city at its core.
- Cork’s highly productive, diverse, adaptable and strong economy, which retains high levels of inward investment and fosters strong growth in indigenous industry.

Designation of Cork as:

- A complementary location to Dublin with strong international connections.
- The primary driver of economic and population growth in the Southern Region.

Policy Commitment and Investment in the required infrastructure to support growth to include *inter alia*:

- Rapid Transit Corridor (RTC), running from Ballincollig town to the Docklands and Mahon via the City Centre.
- Commuter Rail network running through Kent Station between the Mallow and Middleton lines, Interchange between Rail and the RTC and Electrification of the rail network serving Mallow, Monard, Middleton and Cobh, and potentially Youghal.
- A high capacity Core Bus Network serving all of the main corridors within the Cork Metropolitan Area, including Cork Airport, and connecting with inter-city and rural transport services.
- Strategic road infrastructure required to drive balanced regional economic growth and local assets, to include the Port at Ringaskiddy.
- Enabling works and measures to realise the development potential of the City Docks and Tivoli.
- Rapid roll out of high quality broadband across the Region to penetrate all urban and rural areas.
- Continued investment in water management and renewable energy.

Support for delivery of a ‘Corridor Based Approach’ to consolidate spatial distribution of people and employment, an exemplar of efficiency in land use.

Cork 2050 - Some Outcomes



Population Growth - Building on NPF recognition of Cork’s scale, the population will increase from 542,196 to c.846,423 persons with in excess of 60% of overall population living in the Metropolitan area in 2050.



Adaptable Economy - A resilient and diverse economy creating on average over 3,500 jobs per year (120,000 additional jobs) building on comparative advantages and growing indigenous businesses.



Spatial Consolidation - increased need for efficiency in land use with between 3,500 and 4,500 people per sq.km in centres along corridors across Cork City and parts of the wider Metropolitan area.



Transportation - Population growth, urbanisation and improved productivity will create strong demand for infrastructure at both the economic and social level. The implementation of Cork 2050 delivers a standout benefit-cost-ratio of 2.4 for transport investment.



Vibrant City Centre - A highly accessible City Centre with brownfield sites regenerated through mixed-use, densified development (e.g. City Docks and Tivoli), continued investment in the public realm, and increased levels of accessibility in a unique waterfront setting.



Towns, Villages, Rural, Islands - Sustainable growth of communities as a key asset, supporting equality of opportunity through digital, social, cultural and economic connectivity.



Education - The talent pool of human capital will be driven by second and third level education. Third level institutes will have significantly more overseas students in an internationalised educational environment.



Healthcare - Cork will have a state-of-the-art and expanded healthcare system and be recognised as a leader in healthcare innovation.



People first - Through an attractive environment and access to services, people will continue to enjoy a high quality of life with improved health and well-being. Successful place-making and multicultural readiness will attract investment, talent and visitors. In the future, on average 4,000 people per annum will choose Cork as an inclusive place to live.



A Low Carbon Society - A truly ‘Sustainable Place’, Cork will be at the forefront of the low carbon economy. CO₂ emissions will be reduced by 500,000 tonnes through the delivery of public transport. The unique maritime features and green energy opportunities will see the advancement of the ‘blue economy’.

Why Cork

Cork has the physical and environmental capacity to accommodate significant economic and spatial change and has the potential to play a leading role in delivering balanced national socio-economic growth for Ireland.

Supporting the role of Cork through plan-led growth will result in a more balanced form of development across Ireland, relieving development pressure on the eastern part of the Country.

Cork has significant comparative advantages in terms of its key assets and capacity, differentiating itself in the national context, and competing with similar Metropolitan Areas in Europe and globally.

Cork 2050 emphasises the need to safeguard and invest in these assets which are critical for the future growth of Cork, the Southern Region and Ireland.

Assets & Capacity

Critical Mass and Land - Ireland's second most populous City and Metropolitan area (c.305,000 people) with development capacity across the entire Metropolitan area.

Economic - Highly productive economy contributing 19% to National GDP with capacity for inward investment and indigenous industry growth across the whole of Cork, with a focus on the Metropolitan area (e.g. agri-tech, bio-pharma, healthcare, education, research, international business services, tourism and renewable energy).

Cork Airport - Ireland's second largest airport. The total employment supported by activities at Cork Airport is estimated to be 4,550 jobs (or 3,980 FTEs), earning a total of €160 million. The contribution to GDP is estimated to be €306 million.

Port of Cork - Tier 1 Port, handling 19% of all sea-borne trade in the State and capable of taking Post Panamax Vessels. The relocation of Port of Cork's container terminal business to Ringaskiddy will significantly increase capacity of this international gateway. The Port also has Ireland's only dedicated cruise berth at Cobh, with capacity to increase the number of cruise liners over the coming years.

City Centre Brownfield - Redevelopment capacity with 180ha of Docklands with potential for high density mixed use, waterfront development.

Communications Infrastructure - An important IP routing station, Cork has the lowest latency connection to the US of any European Country and the low-

est latency connection to London from Ireland (7.47ms versus 10-11ms for Dublin).

Water Services - An unrivalled water supply with infrastructure to grow the Metropolitan Area by an additional 220,000 people is in place now through the River Lee Dam at Inniscarra.

Transport - Cork has defined corridors of transport demand capable of supporting significant levels of population, employment and educational growth in tandem with public transport networks. It is connected to Dublin via hourly rail services and motorway. Important regional connections exist to Limerick (N20), Waterford (N25), Kerry (N22) and Tipperary (M8).

Education - Third level education accommodating c.35,000 students with UCC recognised as in the top 2% of research institutions in the world and CIT responsible for 250 start-up companies in the last 10 years. Cork's second level education facilities are considered some of the best nationally.

Quality of Life, Place and Heritage - An excellent quality of life, affordable living cost and offering choice, with relatively low levels of congestion. It is an inclusive place with capacity and a willingness to welcome people to their communities. Cork has the largest non-Irish population in Ireland after Dublin.

Energy - Accounting for c.13% of Ireland's wind energy and supplying c.24% of National energy requirements, Cork is unconstrained by energy supply. Significant natural resources which include natural gas, oil, hydroelectricity, onshore and offshore wind, ocean energy, biomass, geothermal and solar energy. The significant renewable energy potential is a key asset in terms of low carbon transition.

Healthcare - Cork University Hospital is the largest university teaching hospital in Ireland with the only Level 1 Trauma Centre in the Country. It has a supra-regional catchment of 1.2 million people.

Maritime - The second longest shoreline of any County in Ireland with 5 Blue Flag beaches, the second largest natural harbour in the world and an extensive marine environment.

Arts and Culture - The community employed in the arts and cultural sphere in Cork is double that of any other location outside of Dublin. The vibrancy of Cork's arts and cultural life is seen in the richness and diversity of activity from cultural heritage and food to performance and the visual arts, and stretching from the City to North and West Cork.

Delivery of the Strategy - Key Themes

Spatial Strategy

Majority of growth will be focussed along increased density, public transport corridors in Cork City and Metropolitan Cork, complemented by improved connectivity in County Towns, Villages and rural areas.

Key directions:

- Metropolitan Cork is the driver of population growth and economic activity.
 - Cork City is a focus for significant increases in population and employment (incl. delivery of the City Docks and Tivoli).
 - Growth is focused on a corridor-based approach in Metropolitan Cork.
 - Integration of transport and land use with an excellent public transport system.
 - Efficient use of urban space and consolidation of development.
 - A sustainable settlement hierarchy.
 - Sustainable growth of towns, villages, rural areas and islands.
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Place-Making Strategy

Create person-focussed places that offer a strong economy but not at the expense of Cork's high quality of life, social cohesion, and well-being.

The Place Strategy is delivered via five priority areas of (1) Health & Well-being (2) Quality of Place (3) Social Sustainability (4) Accessibility, and (5) Vibrancy & Activity.

Place-Making Principles:

- Consolidation at a scale appropriate to Cork.
 - Coordination and integration of land use and transport.
 - Mixed use and vibrant places, with the City Centre as the 'healthy heart' of the Region.
 - High-quality, person-centered building and urban design.
 - Create conditions for the arts to flourish, promote unique cultural assets and encourage creativity.
 - Community specific and community sensitive forms of development, and supporting the creation of successful neighbourhoods.
 - Focus on creating quality public space and public realm with enhanced recreational activity.
 - Build resilience, flexibility, energy efficiency and adaptability into Cork's varied places.
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Economic Growth Strategy

Develop Cork's economic strengths so that it remains highly productive and competitive in the short term, but also equipped to adapt to and drive change over the longer term.

The 5 pillars of Intervention are :

- (1) People - Skills/Research/Education
- (2) Economic conditions - Floorspace/Quality of Life/Housing
- (3) Connectivity - ICT/Global Connectivity
- (4) Business Development - Innovation/Entrepreneurialism
- (5) Organisational - Governance/Promotion & Marketing

Target Growth Sectors:

- Pharma, Bio-Pharma, Healthcare & Life Sciences
- Energy & Maritime
- Agriculture, Food & Agri-Tech
- Financial, Business Services & Fintech
- Leisure & Tourism
- Technology & Research
- Education

Delivery of the Strategy - Key Themes (cont.)

Connectivity - Strategic Infrastructure

Target growth along increased density corridors, with delivery of transport, water, energy and ICT infrastructure which is future-proofed and supports competitiveness, climate change adaptation and quality of life.

The Strategy comprises a mix of strategic initiatives, policies and infrastructure which will maximise the benefit from investment, particularly in relation to transport:

- Targeting growth along Key Transport Corridors - High capacity East-West and North-South corridors within the City and Metropolitan Area (serving City Centre, City Docks, Tivoli and strategic greenfield locations in Metropolitan Area including Monard SDZ).
- Promote Sustainable Land Use & Transport - Coordinate land use and infrastructure investment to reduce the need to travel, enable walking, cycling and public transport use.
- Capitalise on existing water infrastructure capacity, and continue steady investment to 2050.
- Accelerate Broadband rollout, and maximise potential of Cork's international Tier 1 digital connectivity.
- Exploit Cork's potential for sustainable energy generation, matched by energy efficiency improvements in transport and the built environment.
- Embrace the power of technology to maximise infrastructure capacity, efficiency and return on private and exchequer investment.
- Ensure opportunities for recreational and amenity are provided (e.g. Marina Park, Tramore Valley Park, Lee Fields to Ballincollig Park, and the Cork Harbour Greenway).

Towns, Villages, Rural Areas and Islands

Cork 2050 puts forward an integrated approach which seeks to maximise the opportunities from the strengths of each individual area, and endeavour to create a cohesive, integrated, mutually reinforcing whole of County approach—the 'Cork Proposition'. These areas collaborate with and deliver for the whole of Cork and indeed the Southern Region and Ireland as a whole, and result in:

- Enhancement through variable access to services for all rural communities, and improvement of transport infrastructure to ensure social and economic connectivity across the whole of Cork.
- Improvement in the demographic structure of areas which are declining or have an ageing population, and strengthen cultural vibrancy.
- Provision of a lifestyle alternative to those who do not wish to live in larger urban centres.
- Creation of economic opportunity in towns, villages, rural areas and islands through the stabilisation of the primary production industries, agriculture, tourism, and the creation of added-value enterprises associated with these industries, including small & medium enterprises.
- Reduction in environmental outputs from within towns, villages, rural areas and islands, and strengthening the natural environment (e.g. enhancement of environmental quality through the active pursuit of dereliction; promotion and support of the re-use of obsolete buildings and sites for residential purposes; and the encouragement of walking and cycling).

Cork's Unique Environment – Sustainability

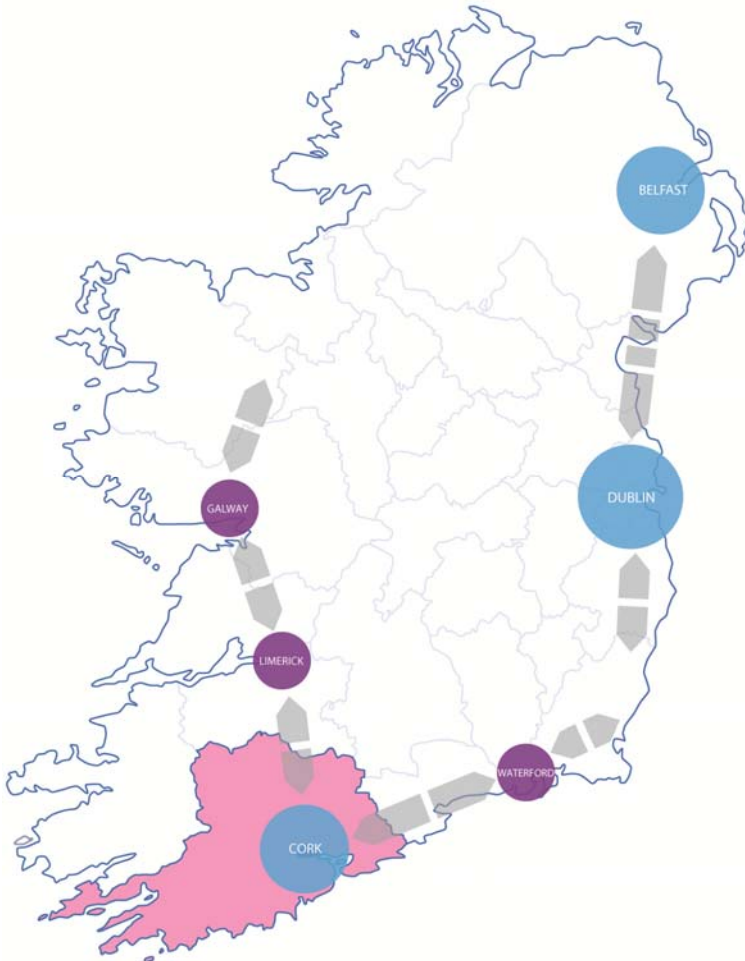
Cork has significant potential to grow whilst adapting to climate change and taking advantage of the opportunities presented by a low carbon future.

Cork is unique in its ability to contribute towards Ireland's shift to a low carbon future, grounded in capacity and potential for sustainable energy generation.

Key initiatives:

- Cork Harbour will become a Strategic National Energy Zone—The location for a Strategic Energy Zone and leader in Maritime Planning and Development in recognition of its City waterfront, its deep-water harbour, energy opportunities and diverse coastline.
- Be a 'first mover' in relation to marine spatial planning.
- Invest in areas which generate growth in the 'blue economy'.
- Embrace the potential for technology to improve water management.
- Reduce emissions through the delivery of high capacity public transport.
- Manage Cork's Green Infrastructure sustainably, enhancing its social and economic functionality.
- Create a diverse network of amenity and recreation spaces and green links, integrated into sustainable urban quarters.
- Protect and utilise the unique and varied built heritage and character of Cork City, towns, villages, rural areas and islands.
- Make strategic choices in terms of energy efficiency including the use of energy efficient technologies across the economy.

Strategic Framework



International **Cork Connected**

Cork’s international role makes a significant contribution to the Irish economy. Globally connected through people, infrastructure, business, commerce, research and technology, Cork is a key asset for Ireland in the European and broader global context.

Its international reach can relieve development pressure on the Eastern part of the Country, through working collaboratively with Dublin and Belfast to optimise growth for the benefit of Ireland as a whole.

Cork International Airport and the Port of Cork are key assets providing for global connections with significant capacity for expansion. The low latency connection to the US and UK, and to mainland Europe in the future, place Cork at the crossroads of digital connectivity globally.

National **Complementary to Dublin**

Cork’s profile and ability to compete internationally provides the basis for a complementary role with Dublin at a national level.

Considerations such as critical mass, location and proven growth potential make Cork essential to the NPF goal of a more sustainable balance of national growth.

Cork is the go-to place outside of Dublin in terms of economic activity, with proven productive capacity (GVA per capita is €45,000, well above the national average) and ability to consistently generate job growth (50% of all new jobs nationally in Q2 & Q3 2016 were in the South West Region) and innovation.

The key assets and capacity for growth outlined in this submission are unique strengths that can be national level ‘game changers’.

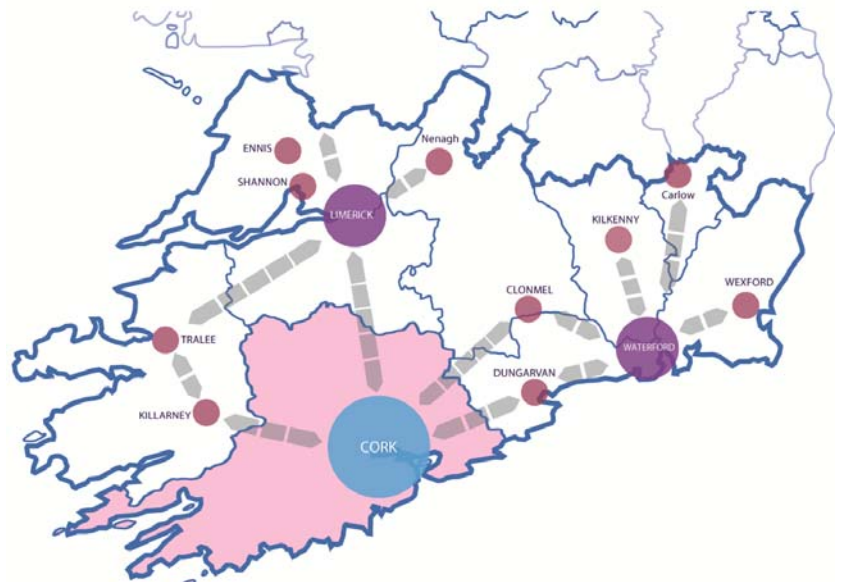
Regional **Growth Driver**

The designation of Cork as a ‘Regional Driver’ is vital to Ireland’s success and long-term growth strategy. It will reinforce Cork’s strategic role as the primary economic engine and driver of sustainable growth in the Region.

Cork’s differentiating features regionally include the largest population, the best transport connections, digital connectivity, the highest levels of economic activity and the critical mass of key services such as education and health.

The sphere of influence will not only benefit the Region but also areas further afield along the burgeoning Atlantic Economic Corridor to Limerick, Galway and further north to Sligo and Mayo.

Cork will work collaboratively throughout the Southern Region, particularly with Limerick, Waterford, Kerry and Tipperary to deliver sustainable growth.



Strategic Framework

Whole of Cork A Unique Asset

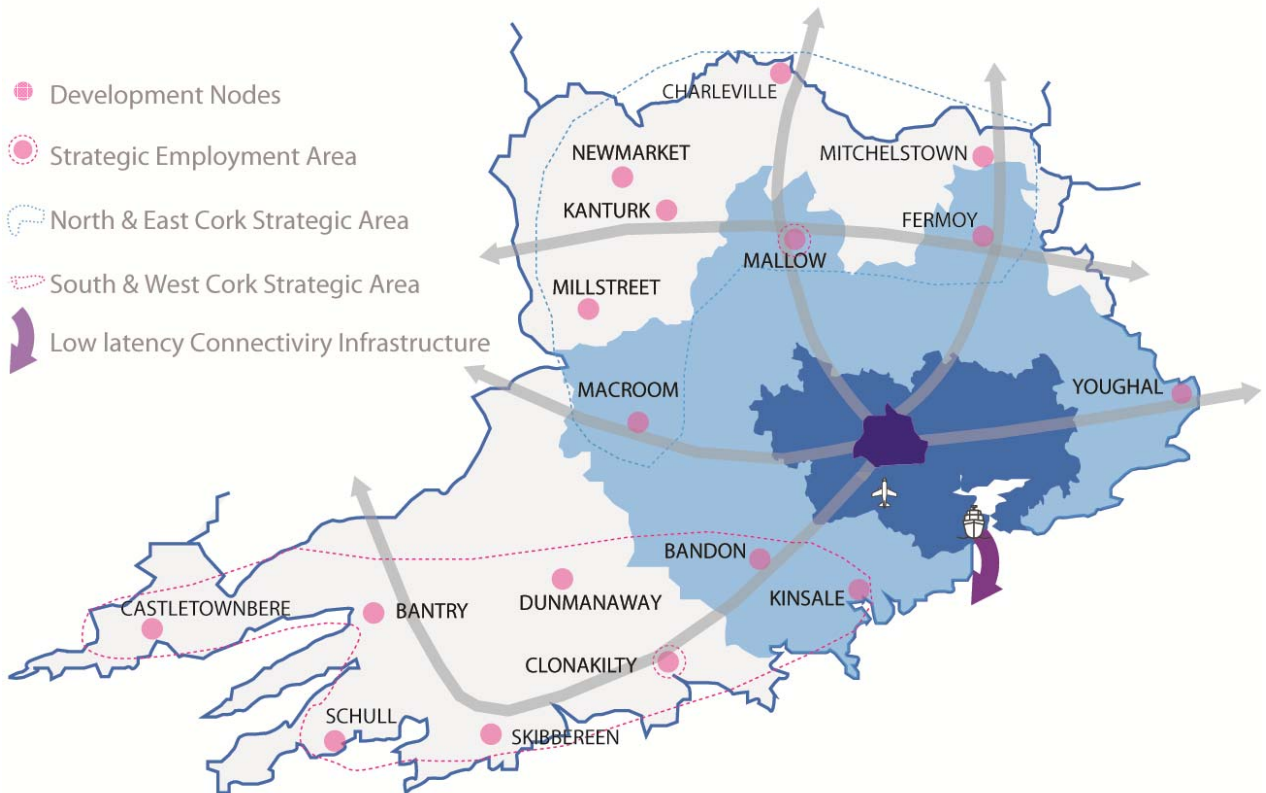
This Strategy sets out the whole of Cork’s compelling proposition as a place that offers a competitive economy and a high quality of life, alongside a broad choice of lifestyles and locations.

Working to strengths and utilising technology will be crucial to delivering growth in the correct manner; with connections along established and new corridors (transport, economic and information), clusters of business and commerce, global interactions and indigenous industry growth all crucial.

The County towns, villages, rural areas and islands are a significant resource with particular growth potential in areas such as agriculture & agri-tech, maritime & energy, technology, and tourism & food (sectors identified as future drivers in ‘Ireland Connected: Trading and Investing in a Dynamic World’). The established settlements will play a key role as development nodes accommodating population increases.

Edinburgh - A benchmarking exercise was carried out at the start of the Cork 2050 process with Edinburgh as one of the locations selected. Subsequently, the NPF Issues Paper identified Edinburgh for comparative purposes with Cork. Based on a vibrant economy, Edinburgh is one of the fastest growing Regions in the UK. It is the second largest City Region in Scotland and is considered a bustling hub of history, tourism, business and education.

Edinburgh’s plan to realise accelerated growth involves a three pronged strategy comprised of: (a) building on existing strengths in the areas of knowledge, culture and technology; (b) taking greater control of decision making power; and, (c) investing in infrastructure supported by both the UK and Scottish governments.



Metropolitan Area & Cork City

A Focus for Growth

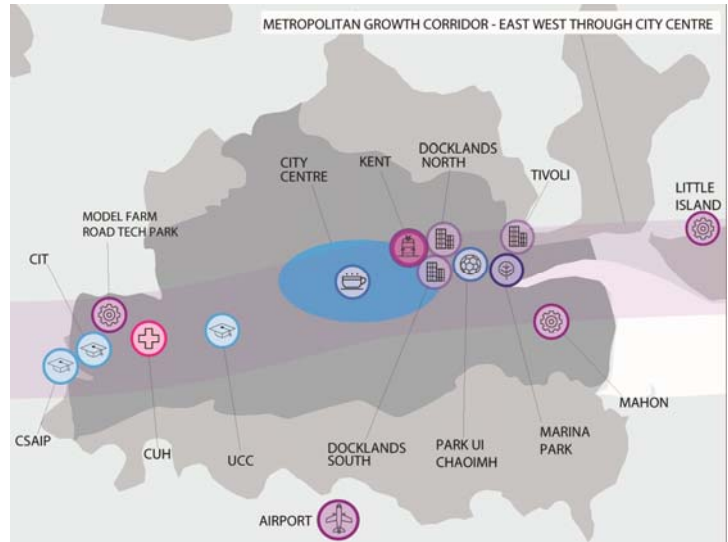
Metropolitan Cork is the driver of population growth and economic activity, with the City Centre as the vibrant heart. The Strategy provides the guidance that will facilitate growth within a sustainable and compact spatial structure.

Cork 2050 aims to integrate public transport and development along growth corridors that have, *inter alia*:

- Clusters of employment, population, education, health and institutional services
- Brownfield regeneration opportunity sites (e.g. City Docks & Tivoli)
- Greenfield expansion opportunities in Metropolitan Area and County including Monard SDZ.
- Opportunities for recreational and amenity (e.g. Marina Park, Tramore Valley Park, Lee Fields to Ballincollig Park, and the Cork Harbour Greenway)
- Access to important gateways (e.g. Airport and Port)

The Cork Metropolitan area will be one of the most highly accessible places in Ireland by air, sea, rail and road. On arrival there will be a suite of options ranging from light rail and bus (with park & ride facilities strategically located), to cycling and walking.

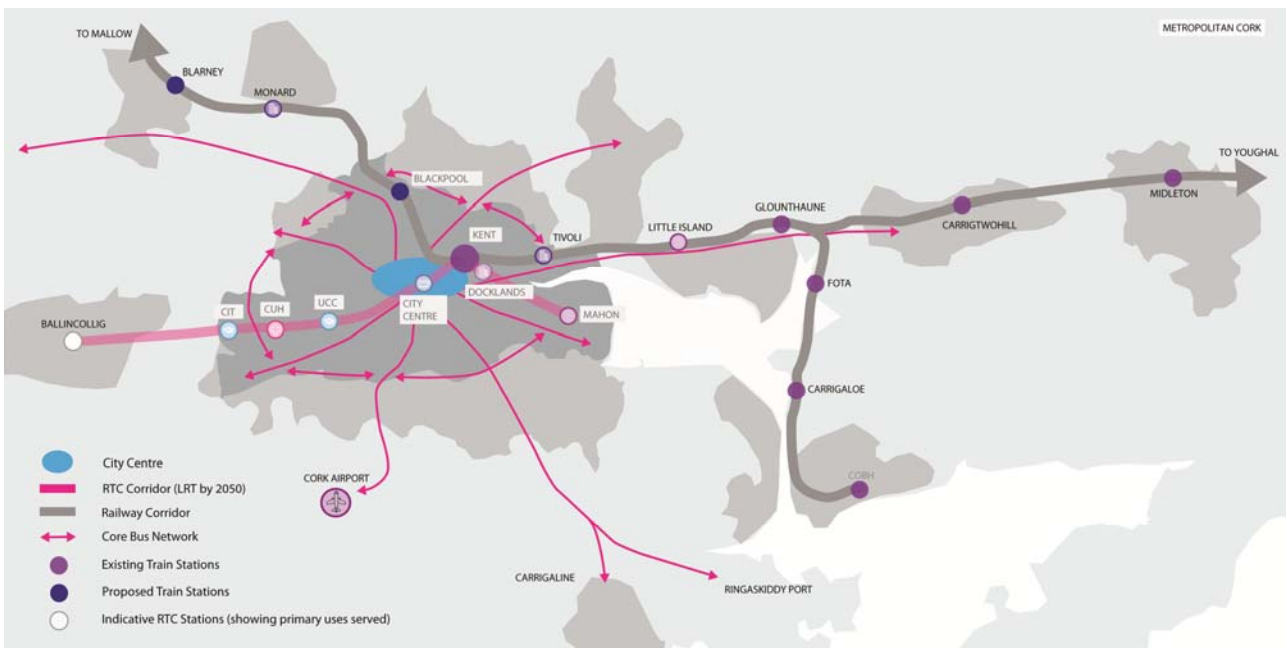
The scale and concentration of development will create legible spaces which consider health and well-being as core design principles to provide a valuable legacy to Cork and Ireland. The shopping, cultural and arts districts will be vibrant places with successful, inclusive neighbourhoods created.



Aarhus - The benchmarking exercise highlighted Aarhus in Denmark as a place where spatial distribution and public transport are fully integrated and being delivered along corridors in association with development.

In planning for the future, the following sets Aarhus' core plans:

- Combined tram/train system under construction to open in 2017.
- 103 km of existing heavy rail converted and 12km new double track provided.
- Bus priority lanes along the main corridor converted into Light Rail.



Principal Actions

Deliver public transport corridors across Metropolitan Cork in the form of BRT / LRT and rail.

Increase population densities along public transport corridors at certain locations to achieve averages of between 3,500 - 4,500 persons per sq. km within a 1km zone.

Roll out broadband across the whole of Cork.

Provide a supply of land and sites that is responsive to and meets social and economic needs:

- Fast-track flexible office space to meet short-term market demand which is designed to adapt to shifts in ways of doing business over the medium and long term.
- Fast-track the supply of housing in the right locations to meet housing need and offer choice.

Develop the Docklands (City Docks and Tivoli) as a world-class, high density urban quarter supporting successful, mixed use neighbourhoods based on the '5 minute city' concept. Support the continued development of the City Centre as a vibrant centre for a diverse range of economic, social and cultural functions.

Support expansion of towns along public transport corridors in Metropolitan Cork.

Develop Monard SDZ to create a new neighbourhood at a greenfield location served by public transport. There should be specific national policy provision and financial support to give effect to Government Policy and implement the SDZ.

Implement the City Centre Regeneration and Development Strategy.

Deliver the improvements to the Port of Cork at Ringaskiddy including strategic roads requirements.

Create a Strategic National Energy Zone centred on Cork Harbour, and develop Marine Spatial Planning in Cork.

Enable the development of rural communities and diversification of the rural economy.

Expand facilities for enterprise and innovation, including enhanced collaboration and networking ability.

Facilitate the development of healthcare facilities which will be considerably greater in 2050, and support innovation in the healthcare sector (including the Health Innovation Hub).

Facilitate expansion of 3rd and 4th Level Education Facilities for Cork and the wider Region at appropriate locations that respond to the increased need for research, enterprise, and innovation capacity.

Invest in local infrastructure (water services, roads, cycling etc.) and the public realm of Cork City, county towns and villages, focussing on improving health and well-being.

Develop key roads infrastructure, particularly the Dunkettle Interchange, M20, M28 and Northern Ring Road and in strategic transport corridors.

Improve transport connectivity to Cork Airport, and as required, capitalise on the existing capacity to expand the Airport.

Facilitate renewable energy generation in Cork and improvements in energy efficiency.

Enhance infrastructure and facilities for Cork's arts and cultural environment.

Continue to invest in water infrastructure to cater for growth and the impact of climate change, including increased use of technology to maximise the capacity of water infrastructure investment.

Facilitate improved skills training to meet Cork's economic needs, including improved access to re-skilling and re-training for the whole of Cork.

Develop and expand Cork's Green Infrastructure and Eco-System Services Network.

Develop parks and opportunities for recreation and amenity (e.g. Marina Park, Tramore Valley Park, Lee Fields to Ballincollig Park, and the Cork Harbour Greenway).

Communicate Cork's identity and brand image nationally and internationally.

Conclusion

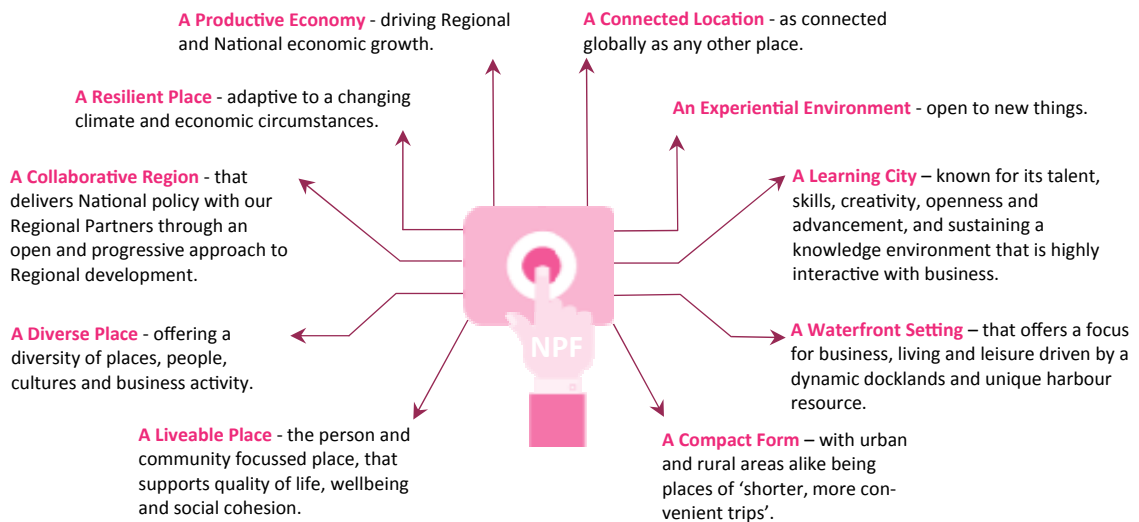
The NPF comes at a time when action and intervention is needed at a National level to deal with uneven growth and spatial distribution in the context of high levels of growth over the coming decades.

Decisions need to be based on clear evidence with investment in those areas with the greatest capacity, ability to adapt and willingness to collaborate.

Cork 2050 is a Strategy that builds on current strengths and equips Cork for a changing future in terms of population increase, economic activity, movement and land use.

We believe the proposition for Cork, to be the focus for balanced national growth, is compelling as it can be achieved in a manner that maximises potential, improves people’s lives and efficiently uses assets.

Cork County Council and Cork City Council jointly look forward to working with the National Government and our regional partners in the implementation of Ireland 2040 – Our Plan, the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and Cork 2050.





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