

Engineers Ireland

Statement on ‘Project Ireland 2040’

16th February 2018

Highlights

- €116 billion National Development Plan provides a 10-year pipeline of projects and should encourage confidence in the engineering sector
- A single infrastructure authority should be established to ensure the efficient delivery of strategic infrastructure
- 20-year planning central to enabling prosperity, wellbeing and long-term growth
- The country must plan for the concentration of population and jobs growth in city-regions
- Now, more than ever, we need to inspire more young people to study engineering

Engineers Ireland has welcomed the publication by Government of the *National Planning Framework (NPF)*, calling it “a critically important framework for the sustainable development of our country over the next generation.” The organisation also strongly welcomed the joint publication of the €116 billion 10-year *National Development Plan (NDP)*, saying “the alignment of spatial planning and investment is a vital step towards sustainable growth and effective investment.”

Commenting on the announcements, Caroline Spillane, Director General, Engineers Ireland, said: “Spatial planning and infrastructure delivery are important determinants of how we live, work and grow old. Yet planning in Ireland has frequently been inadequate for the country’s needs and based on a short-term and local view. Engineers Ireland has long advocated for planning that is evidence-based, long-term and divorced from the electoral cycle. We therefore welcome the 20-year approach taken in Project Ireland 2040 which will be central to enabling prosperity, wellbeing and long-term growth.”

In relation to the implementation of the NPF and NDP, Ms Spillane welcomed the attention given to institutional reform. “A new National Regeneration and Development Agency will be the centre of expertise in strategic land development, an Infrastructure Projects Steering Group will develop cross-sectoral dialogue on infrastructure, and the Construction Sector Working Group will ensure dialogue between Government and the construction sector.”

However, she said that the Government must go one step further: “Engineers Ireland believes the Government must establish a single infrastructure authority to oversee the implementation of the

National Planning Framework and National Development Plan projects across Government departments and State agencies.

“This new authority should bring together the myriad of institutions and policy instruments which are currently involved in infrastructure and the new authority should be placed on a statutory footing. This approach would ensure the integrated and streamlined delivery of priority infrastructure projects. The authority would seek to build cross-party and cross-sectoral consensus, as well as public and media understanding and support.”

President of Engineers Ireland, Dr Kieran Feighan said the organisation strongly supports planning for the concentration of growth in city-regions and other urban areas: “In line with international trends, we must prepare for the majority of population and jobs growth to be focused in urban centres. This will mean putting in place strategic systems of infrastructure to support growth, such as public transport networks, water services and flood defences. The NPF is a critically important framework for the sustainable development of our country over the next generation.”

Dr Kieran Feighan continued: “We must also rebalance national development to ensure more widespread access to the economic recovery and to relieve the mounting pressure on Dublin. We welcome the steps taken towards developing critical mass along the Atlantic Economic Corridor (Waterford, Cork, Limerick/Shannon, Galway, Sligo and Letterkenny/Derry), which can act as a counterbalance to Dublin in terms of attracting population, employment and investment. We are pleased the NDP will channel investment into improving the attractiveness and connectivity of this corridor. At the same time, it is important to recognise the capital city as the national economic driver and it must continue to develop, prosper and compete as an internationally significant city.”

The organisation also welcomed the 10-year pipeline of projects contained in the €116 billion National Development Plan. They said that many of these projects have been identified by expert engineers as vital pieces of infrastructure in Engineers Ireland’s annual *State of Ireland* reports, including:

- National Broadband Plan
- Flood risk management
- Metro Link, DART expansion and BusConnects
- M20 Cork to Limerick
- Airports and ports
- Renewables and grid interconnection
- Retrofitting for energy efficiency
- Water and wastewater treatment and networks

The full pipeline of projects, they said, should inspire confidence in the engineering sector in the years ahead.

Dr Kieran Feighan added: “Every objective contained in these plans will require the engineering community to play a significant role. Engineers will be crucial in delivering compact and smart growth, enhanced regional accessibility, high-quality international connectivity, a strong digital economy, transition to a low carbon and resilient society and the sustainable management of water and other resources. Now, more than ever, we need to inspire more young people to study engineering.”

In an effort to demystify the subject of engineering, Engineers Ireland's STEPS programme - funded under Science Foundation Ireland's Discover Programme Call - encourages primary and post-primary students to explore the world of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), while promoting engineering as a study and career choice. Engineers Week, Engineers Ireland's annual festival of engineering, takes place nationwide from 24 February to 2 March 2018.

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Background to Engineers Ireland

With over 23,000 members from every discipline of engineering, Engineers Ireland is the voice of the engineering profession in Ireland. Engineers Ireland was established in 1835 making us one of the oldest and largest professional bodies in the country. Members come from every discipline of engineering, and range from engineering students to fellows of the profession.

Our responsibility is to

- Promote knowledge of engineering
- Establish and maintain standards of professional engineering and engineering education
- Provide opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Maintain standards of professional ethics and conduct
- Ensure that professional titles are granted to qualified candidates
- Act as the authoritative voice of the engineering profession in Ireland

Our Vision Statement

Engineers Ireland: a community of creative professionals delivering solutions for society.

Our Mission Statement

Engineers Ireland is an organisation that enables the engineering community to progress their professional development, make an impact on society and encourage and educate the future generations of engineers.