

Submission by Deputy [REDACTED], Tipperary Constituency, to the Draft Regional and Spatial Economic Strategy for the Southern Region.

The N24 Project:

It is extremely important that the Strategy reflects the importance of N24 road to the Atlantic Corridor, the Southern Region and Tipperary. There should be no doubt that the N24 (to be upgraded to M24) is the key road link required to connect the Southern Region, its Cities and MASPs together with the M7, M8 and M9 motorways.

The upgrading of the N24 road to motorway standard (M24), improvements to the N25 corridor towards Cork, and the continued development of the rail corridor towards Limerick/Shannon would strengthen links and develop economic synergies across the Southern Region, supporting the role of the 3 Cities as a strong counter-balance to the Greater Dublin Area.

- The upgrading to motorway status of the N24 would hugely benefit the connection towards the port of Rosslare, Shannon Airport and onwards to the Wild Atlantic Way.
- The upgrade, would bypass many towns and villages adding to their economic and tourism potentials, particularly the larger towns of Carrick on Suir, Clonmel, Cahir and Tipperary.
- In light of the upcoming Brexit, this connection to both port and airport is a critical element of economic progress for the Southern Region.

While the above would be the ideal solution, the upgrading of the N24 in the interim from the junction at Cloghabreeda, Cahir to Limerick connecting directly into the M8 Cork to Dublin route would greatly benefit the Southern region and would cost less than the proposed Cork to Limerick direct route. This option would provide better connectivity to three of our largest cities, Cork, Dublin and Limerick and provide better more convenient access to Ringaskiddy Port, Cork, Limerick and Dublin Airports along with Dublin Port creating economic growth, jobs and enticing Businesses and Enterprises into the South Region. I would highlight that priority would be given to completing the overall M24 project in a timely manner should this option be progressed. I might add that Tipperary, Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford County Council have collaborated and submitted detailed proposals on the upgrading of N24 which would be of overall benefit to the entire southern region.

The provision of an inner relief road for Thurles along with the upgrading of the R498 Thurles to Nenagh Road and the N62 Horse and Jockey to Thurles Road to better interconnect the area between the M8 and M7 motorways and Nenagh Town in the northern end of the County.

Transport

Local Transport Plans required for Key Towns and rural areas including further investment in rail, furthering the interconnectivity of the Southern Region and Tipperary to the rest of the country and major cities such as Cork, Dublin, Waterford, Limerick and Belfast. An important aspect would be encouraging more industrial and freight trains where possible.

Planning and Development

Vibrant Town and Village centres are the bedrock of economic growth and prosperity. Every effort should be made to foster these, help town centre businesses to develop and prosper so that they can achieve a viable and sustainable future, creating employment and footfall.

Those who live, work and have a connection in rural areas should be able to live in their local areas and to rear their families and contribute to local rural communities if they so wish. The ability to build rural houses, in reasonable circumstances, should be included in the plan.

Clonmel

A full section needs to be included which sets out the "Clonmel 2030" Plan and the projects under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund application.

Tipperary Town/Carrick on Suir

A coherent policy is required to encourage investment in Tipperary Town which would strengthen the entire West Tipperary area. Carrick on Suir also has massive potential and along with the upgrading of the N24 to motorway status and thereby the two towns connectivity to the region would, I believe, entice and encourage businesses and enterprises to invest in and locate to both towns.

Tourism

The tourism potential for the Southern Region and Tipperary are immense. The ongoing development of this and the promotion and investment in Irelands Ancient East should be paramount, to create employment, investment and footfall.

Natural Resources

LAWCO is a key element for the future management of the quality of our waterways, which the communities playing a key role. I would hope that the Regional Assembly would look at the inclusion of a Case Study on LAWCO as a best practice model.

Rural Broadband

Lack of Rural Broadband remains a serious issue in many areas. An important element of this is lack of investment and a lack of a coherent vision and plan for its role out. I have no doubt that a reliable, dependable fibre broadband network would entice economic growth in the region and attract business, FDI along with building upon our own homebred small to medium enterprises and businesses.

Disadvantaged Areas

Consideration should be given to introducing a RAPID type programme to provided support to groups tackling social exclusion and improving quality of life in disadvantaged urban areas and provincial towns across the region.

Conclusion

The successful adoption of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region is a crucial step in the sustainable growth of our Region and the Counties and urban centres within it. I would hope that the elected members and Executive of the Regional Assembly would consider the issues which I have raised above in finalising the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.