



## Context

### Global

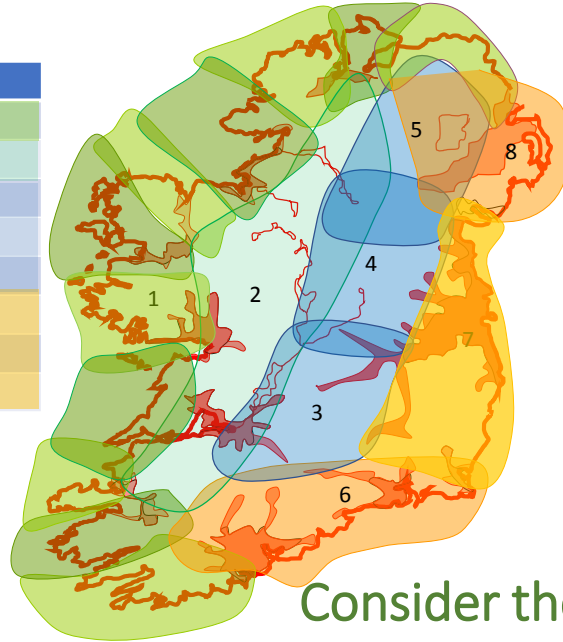
- Loss of Agricultural Role
- Urbanisation of Society

### Local [Ireland]

- Intrinsic Differences of Opportunity
- Late, Slow Urbanisation



RURAL IRELANDS	
1	Atlantic Irelands
2	Western Ireland
3	South Midlands
4	Central Midlands
5	North Midlands
6	The South East
7	The East
8	The North East



## Consider the Facts

Many Rural Irelands

Proportion of farmers in the workforce is down 85% in last 50 years

75% of workforce is over 50.

Agriculture's share of the workforce [4.6%] and of the economy is now very small

12% of all farms produce 60% of output

Less than 30% of the total farmed land area used



## Consider the Facts

Rural Population declines in response to declining demand for Agricultural Labour

Only country in Europe that has less people now than it did in the eighteenth century.

42% living in rural areas compared to the EU average of 27%

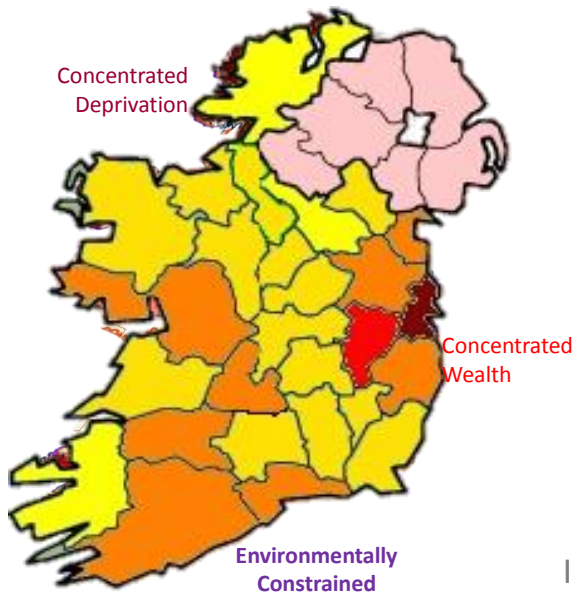
1916 33% Urban  
66% Rural

2016 63% Urban:  
37% Rural



## Consider the Facts

Ireland is Urbanising



Ecological Designation

## Challenge

How to 'cherish all children equally' – when they are not equally endowed?

## Consider the Facts

Intrinsic Differences drive Wealth

## Changing Main Street

- New Online Retail Model
  - Oxford St, London
  - O'Connell St, Dublin
  - George's St, Dun Laoghaire
  - Main St, Anywhere
- 'Traditional' Main Street is relatively recent
- Irish Towns are relatively recent



Capel St, Dublin, 1797

*Ireland: 60% shop online;  
Growing at 8% pa [5<sup>th</sup> highest in world]  
Average annual spend €1,000  
€3bn overseas*

## Consider the Facts

Global Retreat of Retail

## Rural Settlements are Changing

- Unsuitable Fabric and Layout
- Inflexible and Under-capitalised ownership
- Economic severance from Hinterland
- Burdened by External Values [Heritage, Tradition]
- Lack of Comparative Advantages [Cost, Convenience, Quality]
- Social Apartheid
- Unrealistic Expectations & Entitlement



## Adverse Drivers

### External Adverse Drivers - Society

#### Values

- Abstraction, idealism and precaution - *not action*
- Protection, preservation and restriction - *not use*

#### Economics

Agricultural change and modernisation

### Internal Adverse Drivers - Residents

#### Values

- Nostalgia, blaming and denial - *not neglect*
- Opinions, expectations, entitlements - *not evidence*

#### Economic

Property Ownership

## Solutions - General

- Purposeful Planning  
*What is each place for?*
- *Select* Spatial & Sectoral Specialism
- *Admit*, Embrace and Anticipate Change
- *Avoid* Blame
- *Control* Nostalgia



## Solution Strategies

Accept Reality  
Use it or lose it  
Choose to change  
Positive Planning



## Solutions - Specific

### Objectives

- Settlements-to-settle-in
- Rural transport Network is key
- Assigned Hinterland 'New Townlands'

### Actions

- *Accept* the Inevitable
- *Incentivise* Change
- *Address* Market Failure

## Solutions – *Settlements-to-settle-in*



- Active conversion from Commercial to Residential Centres
- Adopt Measurable Expectations & Values
- Identify Specialisation and Concentration
- Pursue Quality-of-Life Targets

## Solutions – *Settlements-to-settle-in 1*

### **Pursue Quality-of-Life Targets**

- Convenience [Connectivity]
- Affordability
- Expression [Culture & Leisure]
- Amenity [social, natural,



### **Active Conversion from Commercial to Residential Centres**

- Rezoning and Exemptions
- Re-orientation away from Employment
- Re-define Success
- Invest
  - Affordability
  - Mobility
  - Connectivity
  - Facilities [Health, Childcare, Education, Age, Leisure]

## Solutions – *Settlements-to-settle-in 2*

### Adopt Measurable Expectations & Values

- Affordability
- Connectivity
- Availability
- Amenities



### Identify Specialisation and Concentration [non-commercial]

- Aging
- Health
- Tourism
- Culture & Leisure
- Activity

## Solutions – *Rural Transport*

- Assigned Hinterlands
- Multi-modal Transport
- Transport blended with
  - Social Services
  - Quality of Life
  - Amenities





## Solutions – *Assigned Hinterlands*

- Integrated Rural/Urban Policies & Plans
- Integrated Services and Specialisations
- Realistic Change Management Planning



## Solutions - *Address Market Failure*

- Stagnant Ownership
- Scale change
- Investment in
  - New Residential Loop Roads
  - Sites
  - Infrastructure
  - Amenities
  - Mobility



## Solutions – *Incentives for Change*

- Fiscal Incentives for Property Consolidation [Like Farmer Retirement]
- Vision-building around allocation of specialisations
- Awareness-raising
- Strategic and Purposeful Connectivity Investment



## Conclusion

- Examining Emotions is the first step towards a lasting plan
- Accepting Realities is a necessity for progress
- Purposeful Planning must replace Development Management
- Every place can be the best at something
- Heritage must save the town first and the buildings second
- Residential Conversion must be actively pursued
- Rural and Urban must be planned as one
- Transportation is Key