

From: Brian Hopkins [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday 8 February 2019 14:56
To: rses
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Ballina Chamber submission re RSES consultation

Dear Sir/Madam,

1. Enterprise development models that work in urban settings are unlikely to succeed in non-urban settings. The AEC population outside the city areas of Limerick and Galway is scattered among a series of smaller towns and villages which often have poor road links, non-existent rail links and inadequate broadband. Unless enterprise development policies are placed at the centre of the strategy, the centripetal forces that have distorted spatial growth in Ireland are likely to continue to operate.
2. The Mayo Coastline offers a unique opportunity to develop “green” energy enterprise. The early development and implementation of a “Low Carbon” strategy offers the Mayo and the West of Ireland to take a lead in this area. This will attract Foreign Direct Investment and promote a culture of cutting-edge research within our third level educational institutions. The RSES should include an RPO **that a Strategy to develop a “High-Value, Low-Carbon Economy” be developed and implemented at the earliest possible date.**
3. Many of the city and town plans within the RSES refer to links to the AEC with a strong emphasis on transport infrastructure. While this is welcome, there is a risk that the AEC is seen as a transport corridor when in fact it is much more than that. Areas in North Mayo in particular need to be included so that the region can benefit from the regional spatial and economic strategy.
4. We welcome the Smart Region concept in Section 6 and the RPO’s 141 to 162 which will be enabled by the digital connectivity RPO’s 136 to 140. For the concept to be realised, the whole of the region needs to be enabled and not just the main urban areas. **We recommend that a study of broadband delivery be undertaken annually which will include a review of the delivery and effectiveness of the National Broadband Plan and which will make also make recommendations for appropriate interventions and policies to be implemented so as to facilitate the development of a Smart Region.**
5. Page 222 states that the completion of the TEN-T route from Derry, Letterkenny, Sligo to Galway and from Limerick to Cork as a mechanism to prioritise investment in roads and environmentally sustainable public transport as an enabler of effective regional development. Ireland is part of the North Sea – Mediterranean TEN-T Network. The “Core” network runs from Belfast to Dublin to Cork and with a spur to Limerick which has recently been extended to Foynes [Proposal for a regulation (COM (2018)0568 – C8-0385/2018 – 2018/0299(COD)), 10th January 2019]. While elements of the N4 and N5 routes are designated as part of the “Comprehensive” TEN-T network, many of the routes from Galway to Letterkenny fall outside any TEN-T designation. This is as a result of an Irish Government action in 2013 to omit the entire West and the North West from TEN-T status. Thus, the statement on Page 222 is incorrect as there is no Ten-T core route north of Limerick since 2013.
6. Various gaps will arise in TEN-T Core network as a result of the UK’s decision to leave the European Union and there is opportunity to realign the TEN-T core network so as to ensure Ireland’s continued connectivity with Europe. So as to achieve this objective, sea ports and airports will need to be developed further and enhanced road and rail links will be required along the Atlantic Economic Corridor area. The decision of the EC on 10th January recognizes this and aims to ensure the connectivity between Ireland and mainland Europe by amending the current CEF Regulation (1316/2013) with regard to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union. It provides details of “Brexit” investment for the five TEN-T ports on East and South of Ireland (Dublin, Cork, Rosslare, Waterford and Shannon / Foynes) but with the total omission of west and north-west Ireland i.e. NWRA area. While the inclusion of Foynes is welcome, the omission of any port within the NWRA area is a huge concern and has the potential to further marginalise the north-west of

Ireland. The AEC submits that a **Regional Policy Objective should be added to Section 6.3 of the Draft RSES as follows “Support and actively promote the designation of the TEN-T Core Network within the NWRA Region from Galway to Sligo to Donegal”**. A similar submission will be made to the SWA’s RSES in relation to designation south of Limerick. This will provide the catalyst for development of various infrastructural elements such as roads, rail, airports and seaports which are currently not on any programme. The prioritization of investment for this transport infrastructure will be a key enabler to achieving a **“High-Value, Low-Carbon Economy”**

7. We welcome the inclusion of various roads within Regional Policy Objective 109, Page 231 and note that while many of these are not on any current Transport Infrastructure Ireland Programme, the aspiration to develop same must be maintained. The map on Page 24 is particularly stark as the only parts of Ireland that are greater than 60 minutes from any motorway are all within the AEC Region. The designation of TEN-T core network within the AEC going both northward and southwards from Limerick will provide a framework for future roads, rail, airports and seaports. North Mayo and South Sligo need to have the N26 upgraded to enable meaningful economic development in the region.
8. We endorse and support Regional Policy Objectives 113-119 in relation to rail and Regional Policy Objectives 61-63 in relation to harbours. Designation of TEN-T Core network, as submitted above, will provide focus on the realisation of these objectives. However, like many of the roads discussed above, these aspirations are not reflected on any funding plans and it is evident that a much greater commitment in terms of the funding of projects is necessary in the short-term, particularly given the urgency associated with Brexit.

Yours Sincerely,

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