



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# Our Rural Future

## Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

**Dr Andrew Forde,**  
**Head of Rural Strategy & Social Enterprise**  
Department of Rural and Community Development



# New Rural Development Paradigm



# A new approach to rural development



- **Whole-of-Government** policy for rural Ireland for the **next five years**
- Our Rural Future represents an ambitious **new approach** to rural development in Ireland
- Focuses on sustainable **economic, social, and environmental development**
- Emphasises the **interdependency** of rural and urban areas.
- Advocates **an integrated, place-based approach** to rural development
- Aims to **maximise the impact, coherence and effectiveness** of investment

# Consultation Process



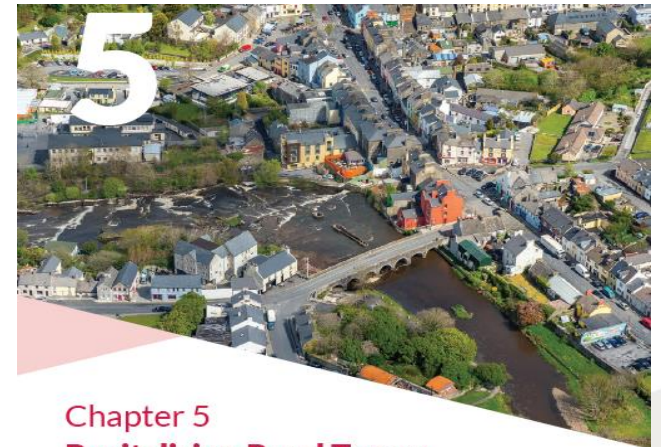
- Policy development was informed by extensive consultation with rural stakeholders
  - 11 regional consultation with approximately 500 attendees.
  - 2 workshops with young people on the future of rural Ireland
  - 2 public “town hall” events
  - An online survey, with over 1,700 responses
  - Focus Groups on the implications of COVID-19 for rural areas
- *Our Rural Future* responds to issues identified by those living/working in rural areas

# What does the policy focus on?

- More than **150 commitments** across Government
- Optimising opportunities from **high speed broadband**
- Transformational potential of **Remote/Connected Working**
- **Supporting Employment and Careers** in rural areas
- **Revitalising** rural towns and villages
- Enhancing **participation, leadership and resilience** of rural communities



Chapter 3  
Optimising Digital Connectivity



Chapter 5  
Revitalising Rural Towns  
and Villages



# What does the policy focus on (cont'd)?



- Enhancing **public services**
- Supporting young people, including through a **Rural Youth Assembly**
- Supporting a **Just Transition** to a climate neutral society and seizing **new opportunities** in the Green and Circular Economies
- Supporting the sustainability of **Agriculture, the Marine and Forestry**, attracting more **young/female farmers**
- Ensuring the sustainability and viability of **island and coastal communities**
- Nurturing our culture and heritage.



Chapter 6  
Enhancing Participation,  
Leadership and Resilience  
in Rural Communities



Chapter 8  
Transitioning to a Climate Neutral  
Society



# Policy Coherence

- Supports delivery of other key Government policies
- Directly supports achievement of UN's Sustainable Development Goals



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



# Key investments



- **€2.7 billion in the delivery of high-speed broadband** to rural areas
- **€1 billion under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund** to support ambitious projects to regenerate towns and settlements of < 10,000 people
- **€2 billion Urban RDF** will support larger rural towns
- Up to **€100 million to support a Town Centre First approach**, including addressing vacant properties and encouraging more town centre living
- **€50+ million invested in walking and cycling** infrastructure
- Significant investment in **Remote Working infrastructure / National Network**



# Other Notable Measures



- Support rural communities to develop Master Plans to meet the long-term needs of their area
- Pilot new rural transport initiatives
- Pilot scheme to support use of rural pubs as community spaces / local hubs
- Prioritise regional sites for new Government or public agencies
- Develop and implement key Strategic Plans across a range of sectors:
  - Outdoor Recreation
  - Dark Skies
  - Agri-food
  - National Heritage
  - Islands development
  - Apprenticeships



# What difference will it make?

- More people **living and working** in rural Ireland
- **Rural towns as vibrant hubs** for commercial and social activity
- **Reduced regional income disparities**
- Improved **access to public services**, such as transport links
- Rural Ireland benefits from the **transition to a more sustainable future.**
- Rural communities, and especially **young people**, having an active role in **shaping their future**



## Our Rural Future

**Our Vision is for a rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development**



Image courtesy of: Dr. Chaosheng Zhang,  
National University of Ireland Galway



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# Thank you

**Dr. Andrew Forde**

Head of Rural Strategy and Social Enterprise,  
Department of Rural and Community Development

[Andrew.forde@drccd.gov.ie](mailto:Andrew.forde@drccd.gov.ie)  
**@DrAndrewForde**