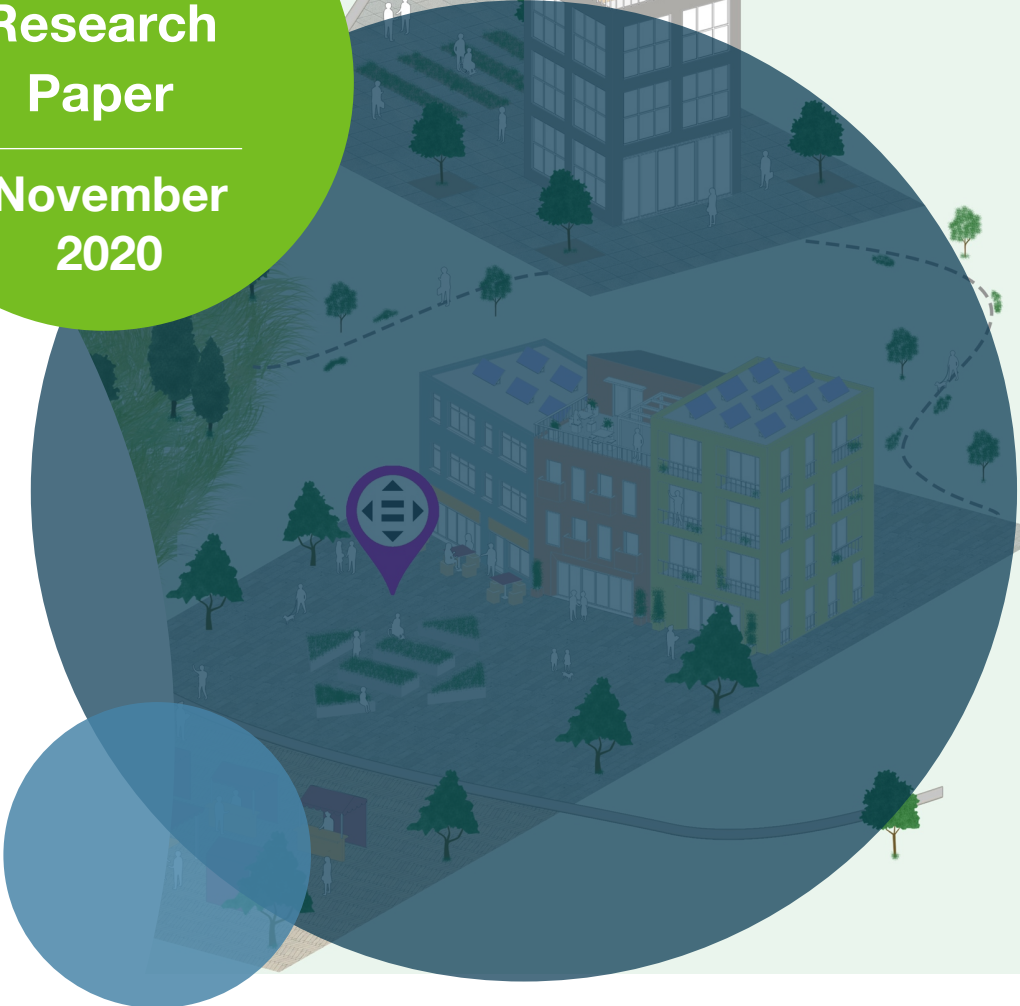# RTPI
Royal Town Planning Institute

Measuring What Matters:

Planning Outcomes Irish Context & Pilot

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

OPR
Oifig an
Rialaitheora Pleanála
Office of the
Planning Regulator

Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Contents

1. Piloting the Irish toolkit

1.1. Ireland toolkit pilots

The pilots selected for Ireland reflected its hierarchical system of policy formulation and administration. The pilots also considered rural and urban contexts, different stages in the plan preparation cycle and sector specific spatial plans. Those selected for the pilots were:

- **The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031**

  The pilot was at the start of the plan with a view to establish a monitoring regime.

- **The Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024**

  The pilot was stimulating a mid-term review and it was used as a mechanism to inform the content of the next plan.

- **Clare County Council Wind Energy Strategy 2017-2023**

  The pilot was at the end of the strategy and it was used as a mechanism to inform the context of the new strategy.

- **Sandyford Urban Framework Plan 2016-2022**

  The pilot was at the end of their plan period and it was used as a mechanism to inform the content of the new plan.

The pilots were all run remotely during Summer 2020. The process was as follows:

A pilot briefing - this was an online session with the participating planning authority, giving a presentation on the research, an over-view of the toolkit and the purpose and aim of the pilots. It was also an opportunity to gain insight in the current monitoring and measurement practices of the local authority and to verify the documents that would be used for the pilot.

Setting up the Policies and Targets - the pilot used the most up to date adopted version of the Local Development Plan. For the pilot all policies (or objectives where there was an overarching one) were extracted and inputted into the Policy columns, separating out what the objective/target of that policy or objective was into the Objective/Target columns.

Indicators and Data - this material was primarily extracted from Local Development Plan Monitoring Statements (end of plan documents prepared for the next plan-making process), Annual Monitoring Reports and Annual Performance Frameworks. The indicators and data were

aligned with the correct Policy/Objective and inputted into the toolkit.

Review and Diagnosis - The pilot areas were sent the set-up toolkits to review ahead of a review discussion. The review asked for what insight the toolkit provided, how to deal with missing data and to consider what some of the next steps might be as part of the toolkit feedback loop. We did not request that the scoring be undertaken but did ask that pilot areas consider the implications and method of scoring.

The key lessons from the Irish Pilots are in the **Measuring What Matters**: Planning Outcomes Research Report (page 39-40).

2. Ireland toolkit context

The Irish Toolkit has been contextualised using the Irish Government's National Strategic Outcomes[2]. These are a spatial expression of Ireland's National Outcomes, which in turn are a national expression of the UN Sustainable Development Goals[1].

The alignment shown below is about both direct and indirect contribution.

Figure 1 National Planning Framework and its National Strategic Outcomes and Priorities of the National Development Plan[2].

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[1] UN Sustainable Development Goals. https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/
[2] Government of Ireland. Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework. P. 13

Ireland's National Strategic Outcomes

| Compact Growth | Access to Quality Childcare, Education & Health Services | Enhanced Amenity & Heritage | Sustainable Management of Water, Waste & Other Environment-al Resources | Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society | Strengthened Rural Economies & Communities | High-Quality International Connectivity | Sustainable Mobility | Enhanced Regional Accessibility | A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation & Skills |

Toolkit Themes

| Place - Design + People | Health + Wellbeing | Environment - Conservation + Improvement | Climate Change | Homes + Community | Economy + Town Centres | Movement | Process + Engagement |

COMPACT GROWTH & EFFECTIVE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Balance regional development
Promote compact growth

MAKING URBAN PLACES STRONGER
Create attractive, liveable, high quality urban places
Develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality
Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages
Strategic employment centres
Development standards to achieve high quality outcomes

PLANNING FOR DIVERSE RURAL PLACES
Promote sense of place & quality of landscape
Arrest rural decline & sustaining vibrant communities
Protect the special physical, social, economic & cultural value
Development in rural towns to contribute to regeneration
Provide appropriate infrastructure

PEOPLE, HOMES & COMMUNITIES
Ensure quality of life and places
Promote healthy communities
Provide for a diverse and inclusive Ireland

REALISING ISLAND & MARINE POTENTIAL
Integrating land & marine planning
Maritime economy & ports
Coastal environment & climate change
Offshore renewable energy

WORKING WITH NEIGHBOURS
Ireland & EU
Ireland & Northern Ireland
Economic & infrastructure coordination
Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales
Shared environmental responsibilities

REALISING OUR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
Environmental & sustainable goals
Efficiency & transition to low carbon economy
Protect & enhance natural capital
Create clean environment for healthy society

IMPLEMENTING THE NPF
Governance & oversight
Ensure robust planning system
Public capital investment

Figure 2 Alignment with National Planning Framework and National Strategic Outcomes

The Planning Policy Statement 2015[3] sets out 14 key principles and four key priorities. The priorities are ones which underpin this study. They are:

1. Maintaining High Standards of Public Confidence
2. Planning and Economic Recovery
3. Enhancing Service Delivery
4. Ensuring Quality of Planning Outcomes

This was one of the first policy documents to recognise the importance of ensuring quality of outcomes through the planning system.

> *"The success of our planning process will be judged by the quality of the places that result variously from, the development of new places, the regeneration of exiting places and the protection or enhancement of places that are particularly sensitive because of the natural and/or cultural heritage or environment they contain[3]."*

It also emphasised the need to deliver quality public services. At this time performance indicators for local government were being reviewed to ensure more effective measurement of how the planning process will perform into the future. These were developed by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014[4].

The National Planning Framework[2] (NPF) establishes 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) ranging from compact growth to ensuring access to quality childcare, education and health services. The language used in the NPF reflects the policy objectives of ensuring quality outcomes, valuing our environment and creating places where people will want to live, work and recreate. The NPF is transposed by the Regional Assemblies through the Regional and Spatial Economic Strategies (RSESs) and by planning authorities in their development plans. Importantly it highlights that the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) *"will be responsible for monitoring and implementing the NPF[5]."*

The OPR's Strategy Statement[6] 2019-2024 takes the above into account in its objectives. It sets out five Goals as follows:

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[3] Government of Ireland. (2015) Planning Policy Statement (P.8), https://housing.gov.ie
[4] Government of Ireland. (2014) Local Government Reform Act 2014, https://irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/1/enacted/en/pdf
[5] Government of Ireland. Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework, P. 12
[6] Office of the Planning Regulator. Strategy Statement 2019-2024, Building a World Class Planning Oversight Body, https://opr.ie/wp-content/uploads

- Goal 1: Building a reputation as a clear, fair and independent voice on the effectiveness of Ireland's planning process
- Goal 2: Driving innovation and learning for all those that are stakeholders in the planning process
- Goal 3: Focusing on the needs of customers and those with whom the OPR engages
- Goal 4: Creating a high-performing and efficient organisation that supports and enhances Ireland's planning process
- Goal 5: Building a resilient and agile organisation with a commitment to continuous learning

The themes covered by these Goals are cross-cutting and complementary. A series of actions and milestones are set for each Goal. The action and associated milestone of particular relevance under Goal 1 is to conduct effective and fair reviews of the systems and procedures used by planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála. Through these processes of evaluation, review, examination, research and dissemination the OPR will assist the planning process, as a whole, to develop and strengthen over time.

Ireland's planning policy and administrative system is hierarchical in nature with the NPF national strategic objectives feeding into objectives of the regional and spatial economic strategies and then into the development plans of local planning authorities.

Local authority performance indicators have been developed by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and which can be deemed *output* indicators at the local level. The OPR is working with NOAC, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the wider local authority sector to develop a more comprehensive set of statistical indicators with which to oversee the performance of the planning authority sector. This expanded set of existing and newer indicators and sources of management information will be incorporated into the PPAF and will potentially include *outcome* indicators. At the current stage of development of PPAF, indicators will sit within one of three thematic categories: 1) Plan Led Development; 2) Managing for Sustainable Development; and 3) Delivering Quality Planning Services.

Currently, the implementation of local authority development plans is monitored through statutory monitoring reports and through strategic environmental assessment (SEA) monitoring.

2.1. Irish language

The Planning and Development Act 2000[7] requires that:

An Bord Pleanála should ensure they have enough employees and members of the Board who are competent in Irish

Oral hearings must be conducted in Irish if the development is located within the Gaeltacht unless parties agree it should be conducted in English.

Development plans shall include objectives looking at the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage including the Irish language

Planning Authorities with a Gaeltacht areas publish their development plans in two versions (Galway County Council has both for instance)

In addition, the Local Government Act of 2001 states that a local authority may, in performing its functions, take steps to encourage the use of the Irish language. This includes correspondence, services, and a variety of uses.

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[7] Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Planning and Development Act 2000. https://irishstatuebook.ie/eli/2000/act/30/enacted/en/pdf

3. Irish pilot example

The pilots were used to test the draft toolkit and to run an initial baseline use of the toolkit. This process simulated reviews at different stages. The review commentary illustrates how the toolkit should be used to feedback into policy and plan-making processes by introducing new targets, identifying where additional indicators and data are needed, or where actions are required around policy implementation.

Below is a set of policies extracted from these pilots and used to demonstrate how real-world material is used in the toolkit. The policies have been anonymised and other material abbreviated or adapted. Any scoring is purely illustrative and does not reflect in any way a real assessment of the policies contained in the tables. There is an additional column for Review Commentary where suggested next steps for a subsequent cycle of the toolkit are made.

	Reference No.	Policy/Objective	Objectives/Targets	Monitoring Indicators	Data	Achievement Score	Review Commentary
Place - Design + People	Irish Example 1.1	Protected Structures	To support the sensitive reuse of protected structures.	Number of protected structures reused	Planning Register		Target setting around protection can be more difficult without a known quantity for what is being protected.
	Irish Example 1.2	Quality of Development	It is an objective to encourage the development of buildings of architectural quality and appropriate to context.	Input report from the Architect's departments in planning applications	Planning Register		Defining what "architectural quality" means, particularly in relation to any design review assessment. This would enable a target to be set to assess the data against.
	Irish Example 1.3	Shopping and Leisure: Objective	To promote the development of high-quality streets and public spaces which are accessible and inclusive, and which deliver vibrant, attractive, accessible and safe places and meet the needs of the different users.	Modal split of users travelling to town centres	NTA		Defining a target would help to objectively assess the data. There is good data availability for this policy.
	Irish Example 1.4	Sustainable Design Policy	To develop a sustainable network of safe, clean, attractive pedestrian routes, lanes and cycleways in order to make towns and villages more coherent and navigable.	Modal split of users travelling to town centres	NTA		Defining a target would help to objectively assess the data. There is good data availability for this policy.

	Ref no.	Policy/ Objective	Objectives/Targets	Monitoring Indicators	Data	Achievement Score	Review Commentary
Health + Wellbeing	Irish Example 2.1	Allotments and Community Gardens	To provide and facilitate allotments and community gardens in the plan area subject to Council approval	Change in sqm allocated to allotments and community gardens	Internal council data		Links between open/green space and health and wellbeing are well established. This background should provide a good platform for establishing Level 2 targets and monitoring.
	Irish Example 2.2	Public Access Policy	Ensure that all new development shall be designed in order to allow for universal access for all people	No of Disability access certificate refused	Planning register		Defining a target as a benchmark would help to objectively assess the data. Minimising refusals would be a target aligning with the policy objective.
	Irish Example 2.3	Health Facilities	Facilitate the development of health care centres, hospitals, clinics, and facilities to cater for the specific needs of an ageing population in appropriate locations.	No of planning permissions granted for health care centres, hospitals, clinics and facilities (including new developments, extension, refurbishment)	Planning register		Defining a target based on need of new facilities would allow a score to be given based on the baseline established.
	Irish Example 2.4	Childcare Facilities	To encourage the provision of affordable and appropriate childcare facilities as an integral part of proposals for new residential developments and to improve/ expand existing childcare facilities across the County. In general, at least one childcare facility should be provided in accordance with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines	No of childcare facilities over housing stock	NACE register and CSO data		Defining a target based on need of new facilities would allow a score to be given based on the baseline established.

	Reference No.	Policy/Objective	Objectives/Targets	Monitoring Indicators	Data	Achievement Score	Review Commentary
Environment - Conservation + Improvement	Irish Example 3.1	Natural Environment Policy: Enhancing Biodiversity	Promote opportunities for the enhancement and protection of biodiversity and natural heritage within the Greenbelt.	No. of applications granted in greenbelt zoning	Planning register		Defining the number of acceptable greenbelt applications consented would give a target that aligns with the policy objectives.
	Irish Example 3.2	Natural and Built Environment - Promoting the Natural and Built Environment	To protect, enhance and appropriately harness the unique quality and diversity of the environment of the plan area, through a wide range of measures.	Status of EU protected habitats	Article 17 report 2019 (NPWS)		Defining a target would help to objectively assess the data.
	Irish Example 3.3	Waste Management	To encourage the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste.	Amount in tons recycled	EPA National Waste Statistics and Regional SDGs Ireland 2017: Topic 6.9 Household waste by county, 2016		Defining a target would help to objectively assess the data.
	Irish Example 3.4	Water Quality	Support the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in achieving and maintaining at least good environmental status for all water bodies in the plan area.	Progress of the score allocated by water bodies	EPA's yearly Water Quality Report and EPA's yearly Bathing Water Quality Report		Defining a target would help to objectively assess the data.

	Reference No.	Policy/Objective	Objectives/Targets	Monitoring Indicators	Data	Achievement Score	Review Commentary
Climate Change	Irish Example 4.1	Renewable Energy Policy: Renewable Energy within the National Park	Proposals for Renewable Energy Developments will be supported where the siting, design, access and scale of the proposal will not have a significant adverse impact either individually or cumulatively. *Abbreviated.*	Number of renewable energy schemes approved by type (solar, hydro, wind, biomass).	4 hydro schemes; 0 solar panel proposals, 0 wind turbines and 2 biomass.	Illustrative: 3	Compliance of the approvals with the intent of the policy to support applications in appropriate locations would be a useful measure.
	Irish Example 4.2	Air Quality Policy	It is an objective to promote sustainable development and transportation strategies in the plan area including the promotion of measures seeking to a) reduce energy demand, b) reduce greenhouse gas emission and c) address climate change adaptation	Progress of air quality index	EPA's air quality report		With the data being available, this policy, target (a national standard), indicator and data set provides a good measurement of the policy. This example is moving beyond outcomes to impact.
	Irish Example 4.3	Resources and Services: Objective 1	Support and promote structural materials in the construction industry that have low to zero embodied energy & CO2 emissions	% waste diverted from landfill (target 60%) Provision of waste transfer facilities Household recycling centres			Data on waste required to complete the assessment and provide a score.
	Irish Example 4.4	No specific policies	Support the development of sustainable low-carbon climate resilient communities	No of SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities registered	SEAI Sustainable Energy Community		Output of the schemes is being tracked and could be used for future measurement of impact.

	Reference No.	Policy/Objective	Objectives/Targets	Monitoring Indicators	Data	Achievement Score	Review Commentary
Homes + Community	Irish Example 5.1	Housing Policy: Providing a diverse range of housing.	Ensure a choice of house types and sizes in appropriate locations to cater for all categories of households.	Number of housing approvals and completions by tenure, type and size	Council's internal housing stock		As there is no target set, judgement would have to be used on whether the data demonstrated good progress or not.
	Irish Example 5.2	Affordable Housing Policy	It is a policy of the Council to reserve 10% of land zoned for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses for the provision of social and affordable housing. The Council will continue to impose a condition on all planning applications for housing on the relevant zoned land which provides for a range of mechanisms to facilitate the applicant/developer to enter an agreement with the Council under Section 96(3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).	No of social housing units delivered over total number of housing units delivered	Council's internal housing stock		Defining a target would help to objectively assess the data.
	Irish Example 5.3	Community Facilities	Promote the clustering of community, recreational and open space facilities, with community facilities being located in local centres or combined with school facilities as appropriate				Defining a target based on need of new facilities.
	Irish Example 5.4	Schools	To facilitate and promote the use of education facilities after school hours / weekends for other community and non-school purposes, where possible	No of schools used for community uses outside of school hours / days	Dedicated surveys		Defining a target based on need of new facilities.

	Ref no.	Policy/Objective	Objectives/Targets	Monitoring Indicators	Data	Achievement Score	Review Commentary
Economy + Town Centres	Irish Example 6.1	Renewable Energy Policy	Target renewable energy generation is xxx MW	Quantum of MW built over target MW	Planning register	Example: 3	Target has been established allowing for an assessment to be made.
	Irish Example 6.2	Economic Development	To maximise the economic potential of the local towns and villages that may contribute to the sustainable economic growth of the plan area.	No of jobs in settlements	POWSCAR data		With the data being available, this policy, target indicator and data set provides a good measurement of the policy. This example is moving beyond outcomes to impact.
	Irish Example 6.3	Third level education and research	To support the further development of appropriate third level educational and research and development centres within the plan area.	no of planning permissions granted for third level educational facilities	Planning register		Define a target based on educational facilities needs assessment.
	Irish Example 6.4	Backland, infill and mixed-use development	To promote a higher density and greater diversity through backland, infill and mixed-use development				Collection of planning application data required to demonstrate higher density and backland infill.

	Ref no.	Policy/Objective	Objectives/Targets	Monitoring Indicators	Data	Achievement Score	Review Commentary
Movement	Irish Example 7.1	Transport Policy: Integrated land use and transport	To promote the integration of land use and transportation so as to encourage modal shift and the development of sustainable transport policies.	Changes in modal split	NTA data		Defining a target would help to objectively assess the data.
	Irish Example 7.2	Transport	To provide good access to the locations of major economic activity.	Traffic counts	NTA		Defining a target would help to objectively assess the data.
	Irish Example 7.3	Sustainable transport	To actively support sustainable modes of transport and ensure that land use and zoning are fully integrated with the provision and development of high public quality transportation systems	Sqm permitted within a ten minutes' walk from high quality transport stop / station	Council GIS		Defining a target would help to objectively assess the data.
	Irish Example 7.4	Rail Infrastructure	It is policy to co-operate with the NTA, Iarnród Éireann, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and other relevant authorities to secure the improvement and further development of railway stations in the plan area.	Investment in railway facilities in plan area	Iarnród Éireann investment programme		Defining a target based on need of new railway stations.

	Ref no.	Policy/ Objective	Objectives/Targets	Monitoring Indicators	Data	Achievement Score	Review Commentary
Process and Engagement	Irish Pilot Example 8.1						No policies were identified within this theme.
	Irish Pilot Example 8.2						
	Irish Pilot Example 8.3						
	Irish Pilot Example 8.4						

For more information about this paper

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