

LEARNING THE LESSONS OF EIRE



Des Cox,
Chair 2011 RTPI Ireland

The Issues

- The Celtic Tiger
- The Political Context
- The Planning Context
- The Planning-Led Future?



The Celtic Tiger – Causes?

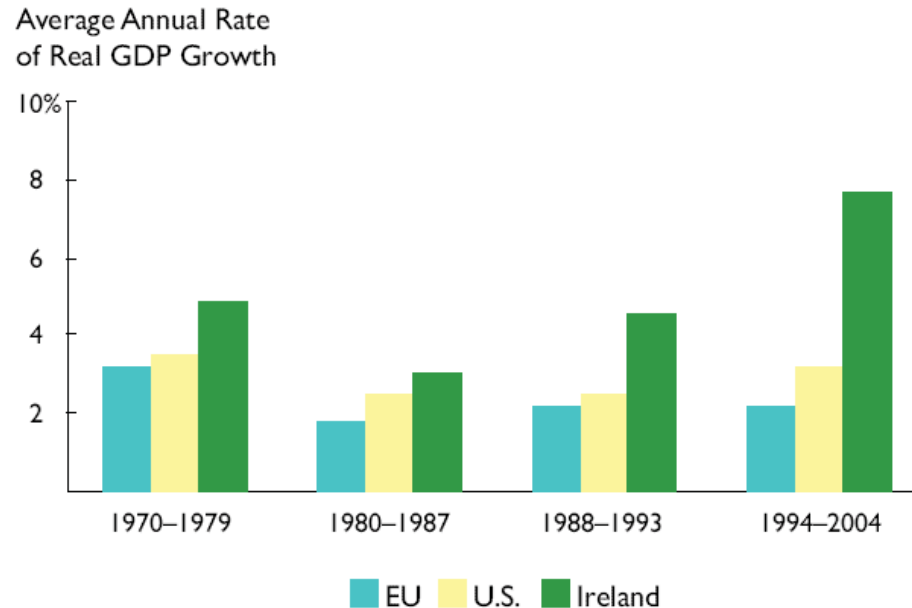
- (EC Funded) State-driven economic & infrastructure development
- Social partnership - employers, government and unions
- Increased participation in the labour force of women
- Decades of investment in higher education
- Targeting of foreign direct investment
- Low Corporation Tax rate
- English-speaking workforce
- EEC/EC/EU Membership



The Celtic Tiger – Just Admire us!

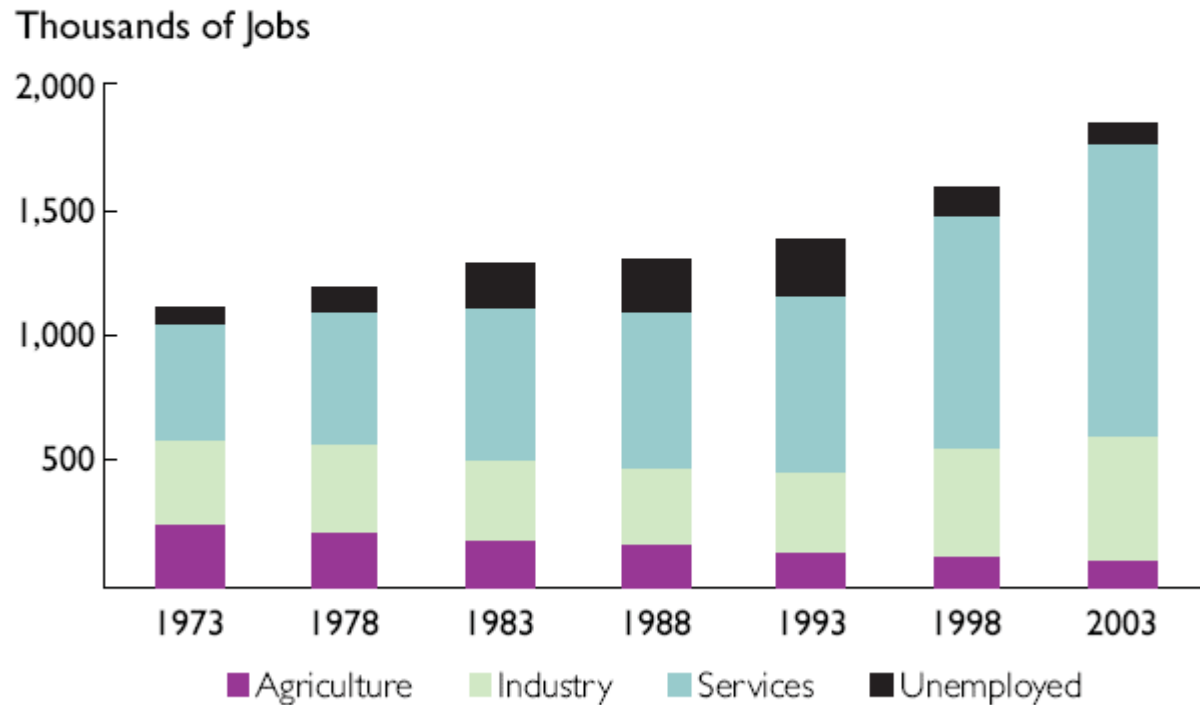
- Economic expansion at an average rate of 9.4% 1995-2000
- Economic expansion at an average rate of 5.5% 2000-2008

Ireland's Economic Growth, 1970–2004



Source: Ireland Central Statistics Office and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Economic Outlook.

Employment by Sector and Unemployment, 1973–2003



Source: Ireland Central Statistics Office.

Irish unemployment fell from 18% in the late 1980s to 4.5% by end 2007

The Celtic Tiger – Alarm Bells?

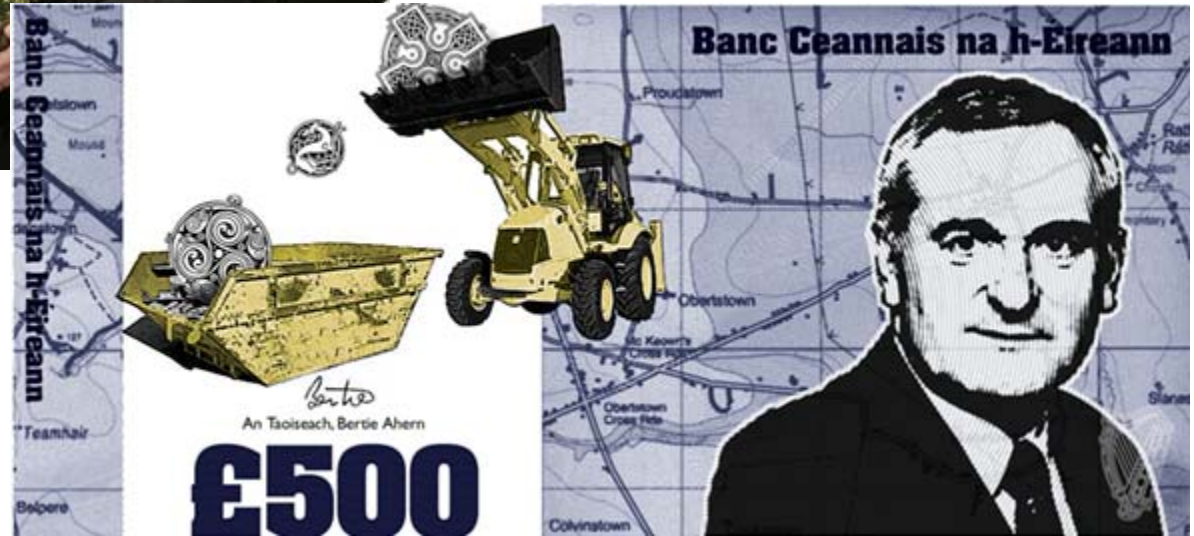
- In 2004, the construction sector represented nearly 12% of GDP – largely employing young, unskilled men;
- Excessive Irish property values;
- In 2004, construction of 80,000 new homes in Ireland (160,000 in the UK - 15 times Ireland's population);
- In 2006 construction of new homes rose to 90,000 units;
- Rising wages, inflation and excessive public spending leading to a loss of competitiveness in the Irish economy;
- 2000-2003, Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy increased public spending by 48%, while cutting income tax;
- Reliance on foreign direct investment, and imported fuel;
- Growing consumerism eroding National culture.

So Why Didn't Anyone Shout "STOP!"? Well would you?

| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | % change 2007- 2008 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------------------------|
| Annual average income | € | € | € | € | % |
| Gross household income (per household) | 51,078 | 55,075 | 59,820 | 60,581 | +1.3 |
| Disposable household income (per household) | 40,497 | 43,646 | 47,988 | 49,043 | +2.2 |
| Equivalised disposable income (per individual) | 19,768 | 21,229 | 23,610 | 24,380 | +3.3 |
| At risk of poverty threshold (60% of median income) | 10,057 | 10,566 | 11,890 | 12,455 | +4.8 |
| Poverty & deprivation rates | % | % | % | % | |
| At risk of poverty rate | 18.5 | 17 | 16.5 | 14.4 | |
| Consistent poverty rate | 7.0 | 6.5 | 5.1 | 4.2 | |
| Deprivation rate (experienced 2+ deprivation items) | 14.9 | 13.8 | 11.8 | 13.8 | |

Source: CSO Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) in Ireland 2008

Especially not if our Leaders weren't....



The (Political) Planning Context

- The Bacon Reports on The Housing Market in Ireland - "to alleviate the desperate plight of first-time buyers";
- Publication of a National Spatial Strategy;
- Local Government responsibility for land zoning.

The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

Main Points

- This Strategy is a twenty-year planning framework designed to deliver more balanced social, economic and physical development between regions.
- Ireland's economic success in recent years has been accompanied by spatial patterns of development which have seen employment opportunities becoming more concentrated in some areas, while economic weaknesses remain in others.
- A commitment to prepare a spatial strategy to plan at national level for the country's future spatial development was included in the National Development Plan 2000-2006.
- Balanced regional development requires that the full potential of each region to contribute to the overall performance of the State be developed – on a sustainable economic, social and environmental basis.
- The Strategy sets out how all areas of the country will have the opportunity to develop to their potential.
- The Strategy will provide strategic planning guidance for a range of Government policies and regional and local plans.
- In conjunction with the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland, Shaping our Future, the NSS addresses spatial issues for the island of Ireland as a whole.
- The rate at which the NSS can be implemented will be subject to overall macro-economic and budgetary considerations.

“The Government will ensure that its own policies are implemented in a manner that is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy” (Bertie Ahern TD, Foreword to the NSS)

The NSS and Some Key Members of Bertie Ahern's Fianna Fail Government, 2002

Gateways

(1) A large urban population (of the order of 100,000 and above) set in a large urban and rural hinterland.

(2) Wide ranges of primary/secondary education facilities and national or regional third level centres of learning.

(3) Large clusters of national/ international scale enterprises, including those involved in advanced sectors.

(4) A focal point in transportation and communications terms: (a) on the national roads and rail networks (b) within 1 hour of an airport either with international access or linking to one with such access (c) adequate, reliable, cost effective and efficient access to port facilities (d) effective, competitive broadband access.

(5) Integrated public transport with facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

(6) Regional hospital/specialised care.

(7) City level range of theatres, arts and sports centres and public spaces/parks. Cultural and entertainment quarters.

(8) City-scale water and waste management services.

(9) Integrated Land-Use and Transport planning frameworks.

(10) Phased zoning and servicing of land-banks in anticipation of needs associated with growth.

(11) Strategic Development Zones

Map 1 Gateways

Strategic Spatial Roles

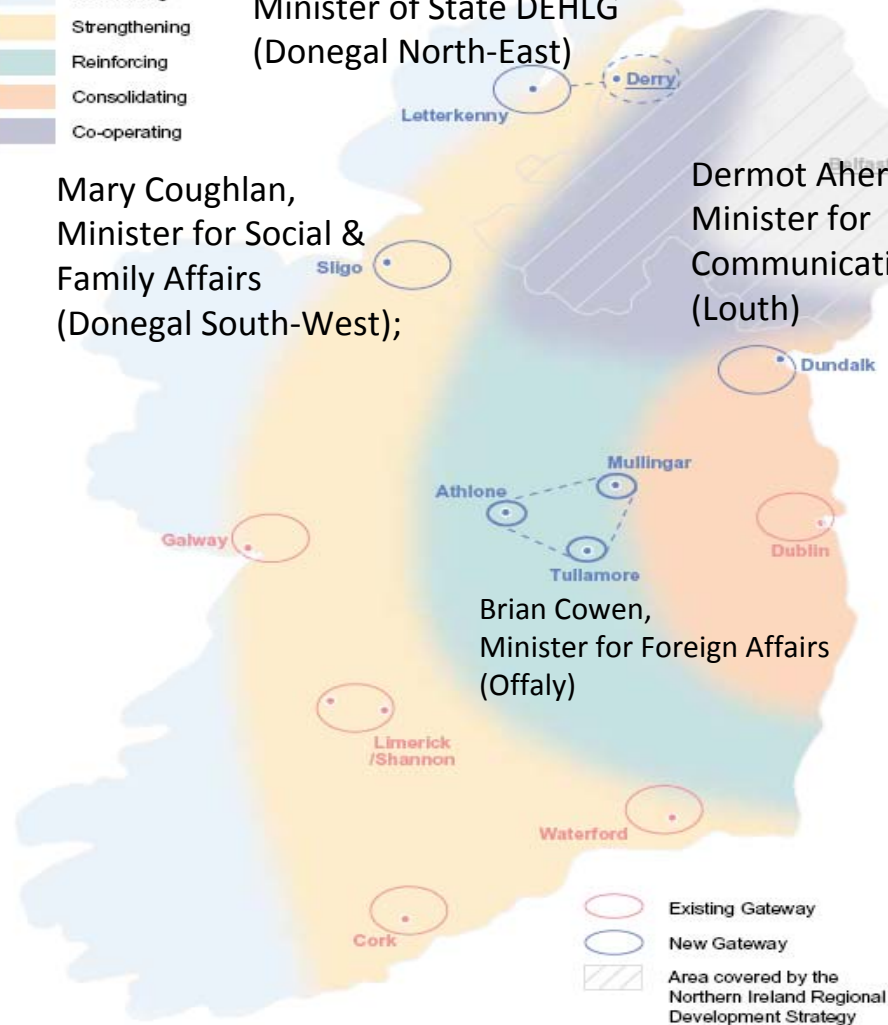
- Revitalising
- Strengthening
- Reinforcing
- Consolidating
- Co-operating

Pat "The Cope" Gallagher,
Minister of State DEHLG
(Donegal North-East)

Mary Coughlan,
Minister for Social &
Family Affairs
(Donegal South-West);

Dermot Ahern,
Minister for
Communications
(Louth)

Brian Cowen,
Minister for Foreign Affairs
(Offaly)



And the Rest of them?

Fianna Fail's programme of decentralisation from 2003:-

- Only 1 year after the government published the NSS;
- 10,922 Dublin-based public servants to move to 58 locations;
- By 2010, only 3,160 had moved to 37 locations;
- Programme is now deferred pending the outcome of a "government review".

Former Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald (RIP) on the Decentralisation programme

“a most flagrant example of the ‘stroke mentality’ which afflicts so much of Irish politics and which has done such damage to our economy and society . . . The blatant hypocrisy of ministers asserting that this decision has ‘taken into account’ the National Spatial Strategy . . . has provided further justification for the cynicism of the electorate.”

“The truth is that transfer of policy-making, involving 3,000 of the 10,300 jobs, is totally counterproductive and will be seriously damaging to the national interest. Only politicians obsessed with political advantage and lacking in concern for the public good could have dreamt up such a hare-brained process.”

Sure everyone deserved a bit of the action....

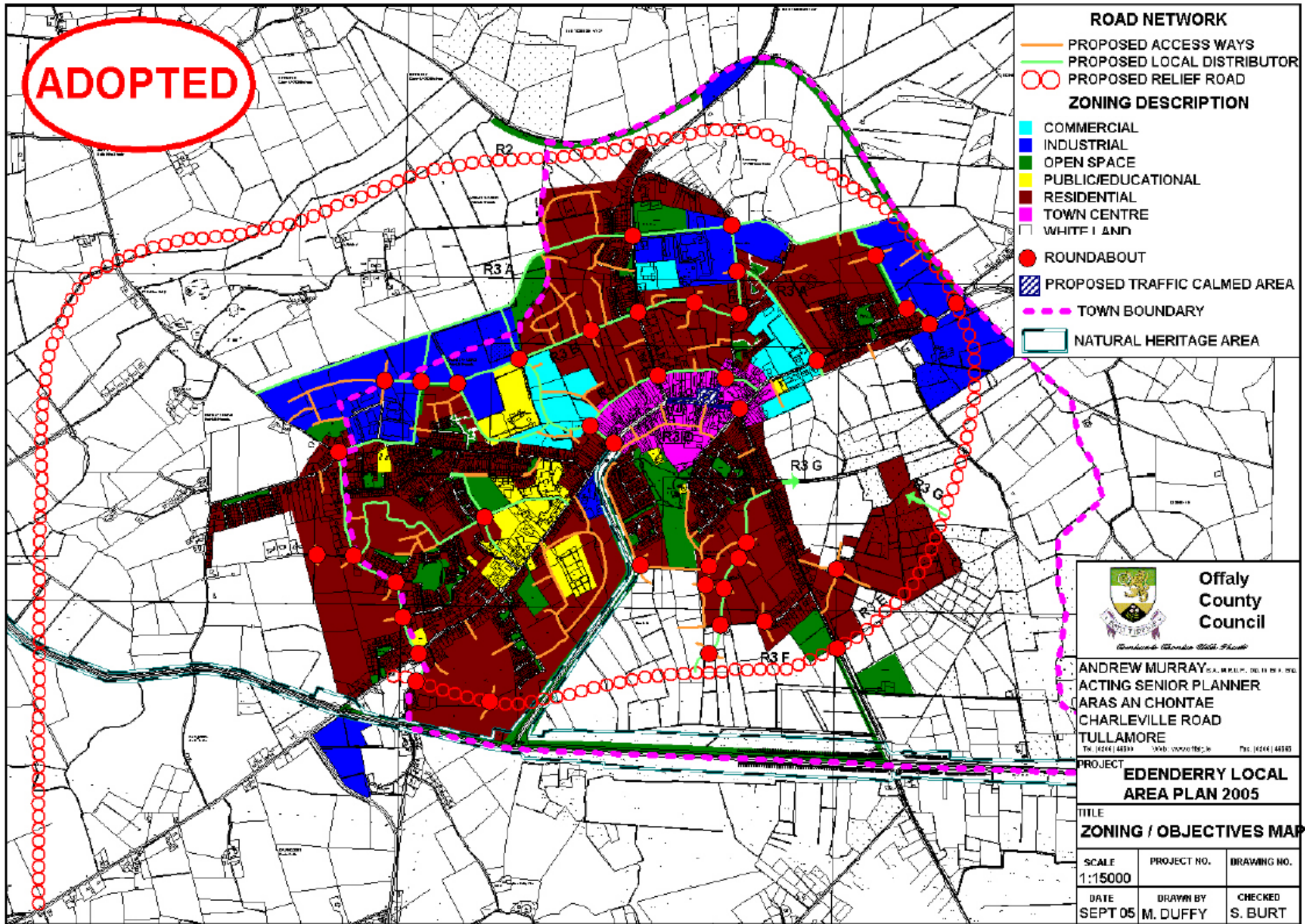
Including Edenderry, Co. Offaly

- Population 2003 - 4,946;
- Commuter town - 30% employed travel over 15 miles to work;
- Land use strategy to provide over 3,000 new houses by 2021;


| Zoning Objective | Previous Zoned Area (Ha) Town Plan 2003 | Total Zoning (Ha) as Proposed in Local Area Plan 2005 |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Residential | 259 | 285 |
| Town Centre | 21 | 21 |
| Industrial | 59 | 83 |
| Public/Educational | 23 | 24 |
| Open Space | 50 | 56 |
| Commercial | 23 | 22 |
| Total | 435 | 491 |

Source: Offaly County Council, Planning Department¹

ADOPTED



- ROAD NETWORK**
- PROPOSED ACCESS WAYS
 - PROPOSED LOCAL DISTRIBUTOR
 - PROPOSED RELIEF ROAD
- ZONING DESCRIPTION**
- COMMERCIAL
 - INDUSTRIAL
 - OPEN SPACE
 - PUBLIC/EDUCATIONAL
 - RESIDENTIAL
 - TOWN CENTRE
 - WHITE LAND
 - ROUNDBOUT
 - PROPOSED TRAFFIC CALMED AREA
 - TOWN BOUNDARY
 - NATURAL HERITAGE AREA

**Offaly
County
Council**
Comhairle Contae Oifaly

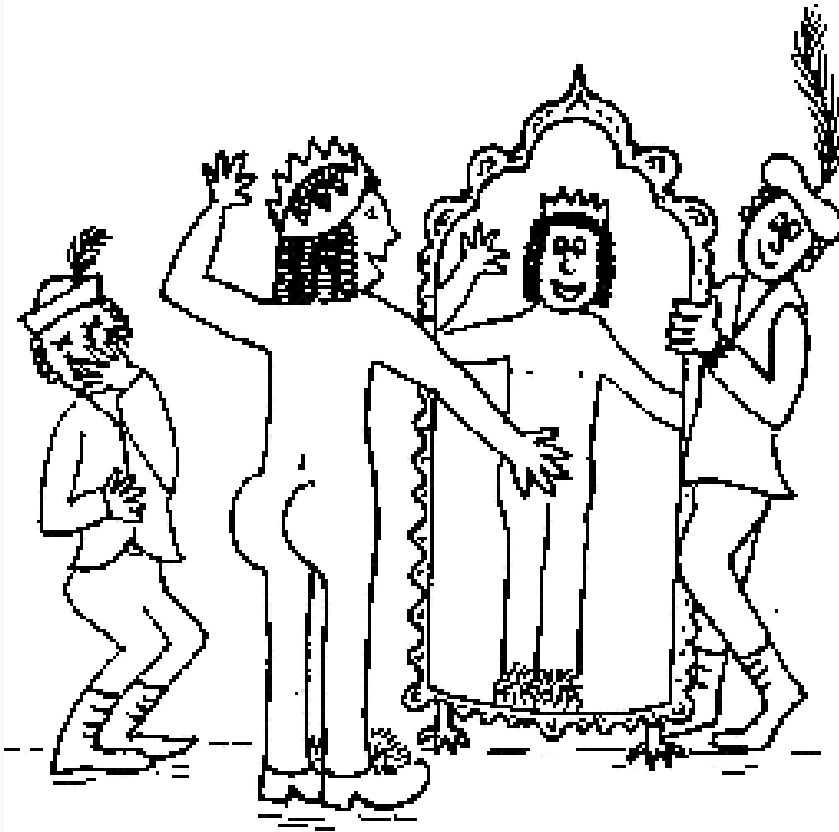
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PROJECT
**EDENDERRY LOCAL
AREA PLAN 2005**

TITLE
ZONING / OBJECTIVES MAP

| | | |
|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| SCALE 1:15000 | PROJECT NO. | DRAWING NO. |
| DATE SEPT 05 | DRAWN BY M. DUFFY | CHECKED S. BURT |

A case of the Emperors new clothes?



'Sitting on the sidelines, cribbing and moaning is a lost opportunity. I don't know how people who engage in that don't commit suicide because frankly the only thing that motivates me is being able to actively change something,'

(Bertie Ahern, Taoiseach during his speech to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions conference 2008, speaking about people who talk down the economy).

But were Planners Helpless?

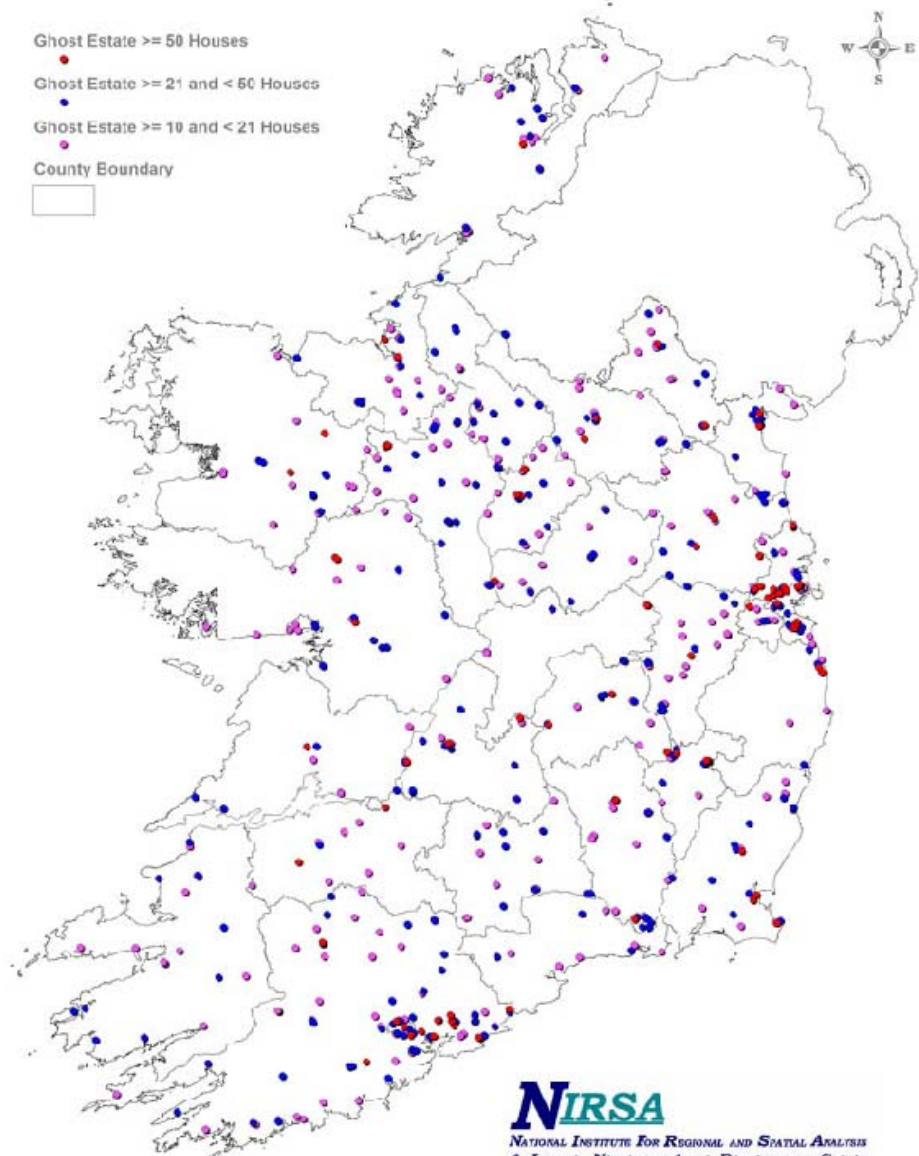


The Celtic Tiger (RIP)

- September 2008 recession;
- September 2008 Banking crisis;
- Exacerbated by global financial crisis;
- Creation of National Asset Management Agency;
- EU/IMF Bailout;
- 2007-2010 GDP fell 12%;
- Approx. 14% Unemployment (highest since 1994).



Post 2005 Ghost Estates of more than 10 houses with greater than 50% Vacancy/Under-Construction



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NIRSA
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR REGIONAL AND SPATIAL ANALYSIS
AN INSTITIÚID NÁISIÚNTA ILM ANAILÍZE RÉGIONACHA GUS SPASÓIL

<http://irelandafternama.wordpress.com/>

The Celtic Tiger (RIP)

“The case is clear: an economically challenged government, perniciously influenced by the interests of the housing lobby, blew it. The entire Irish episode will be studied internationally in years to come as an example of how not to do things”

David McWilliams, Economist.

“We have gone from the Celtic Tiger to an era of financial fear with the suddenness of a Titanic-style shipwreck, thrown from comfort, even luxury, into a cold sea of uncertainty”

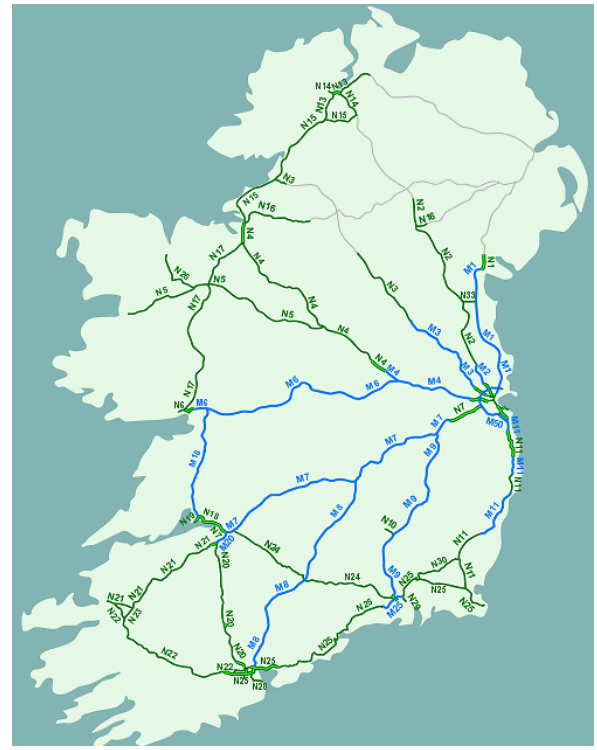
Irish Times editorial, January 2009



However, there were benefits

- Key new infrastructure: road, rail, energy;
- Development and Re-development;
- Creation of a Strategic Infrastructure Planning Board

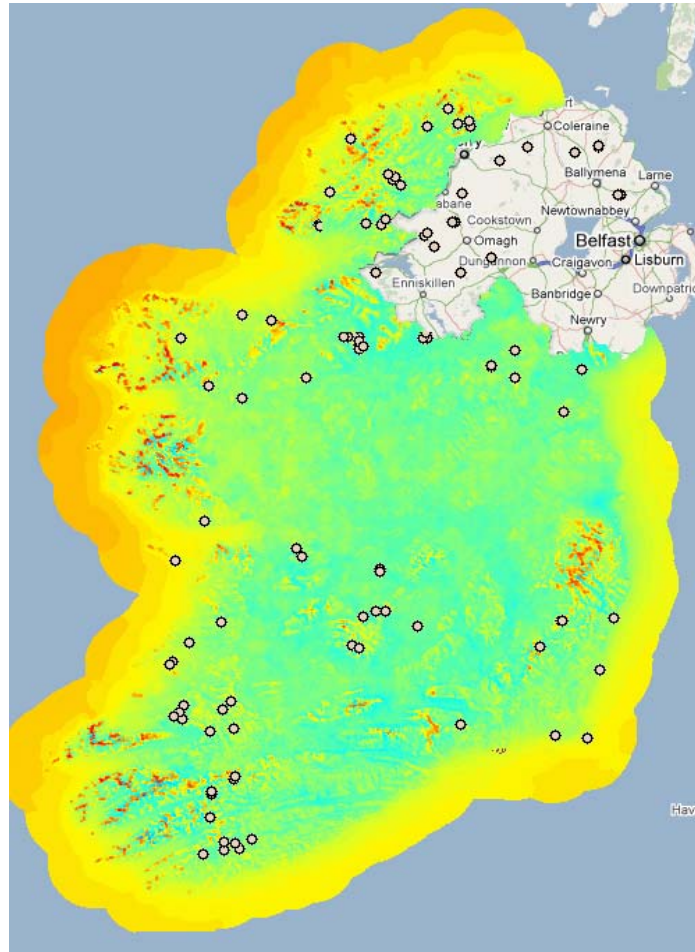




Lessons Learned?

- Too early to say;
- But planning has returned to the heart of development – if only to have someone to blame...
- As with the mid-1990s critical function of carefully targeted planning-led investment in strategic infrastructure.

Such as Renewable Energy and Associated Infrastructure



Source: Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Wind Atlas 2011

And with a little help from our friends...



Is Féidir Linn!