



# Better Lives, Better Business

An Ibec campaign

Making Ireland a better  
place to live and work.





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A four-part Ibec campaign to make Ireland a better place to live and work.

- 01 Housing
- 02 Infrastructure
- 03 Planning
- 04 Sustainability

[ibec.ie/betterlives](https://ibec.ie/betterlives)

“At the heart of our campaigning is an urgency to invest in people and their needs for the betterment of society and the economy.”

Danny McCoy, Ibec

# Better Lives, Better Business

Our ambition is to make Ireland  
a better place to live and work.


## Our campaign

Talented people are the main determinant of economic success in a globalised world. Increasingly, it is the location of this talent that attracts investment, rather than the other way around.

In competing for global investment and scaling its indigenous enterprise, Ireland has differentiated itself through its success in attracting and developing talented people. This comes in many forms including highly skilled migrants from within the EU and educated workers from outside the union (two-thirds of whom have a third level qualification). Ireland's talent pool has also swelled with returning emigrants and an exceptionally highly educated local workforce.

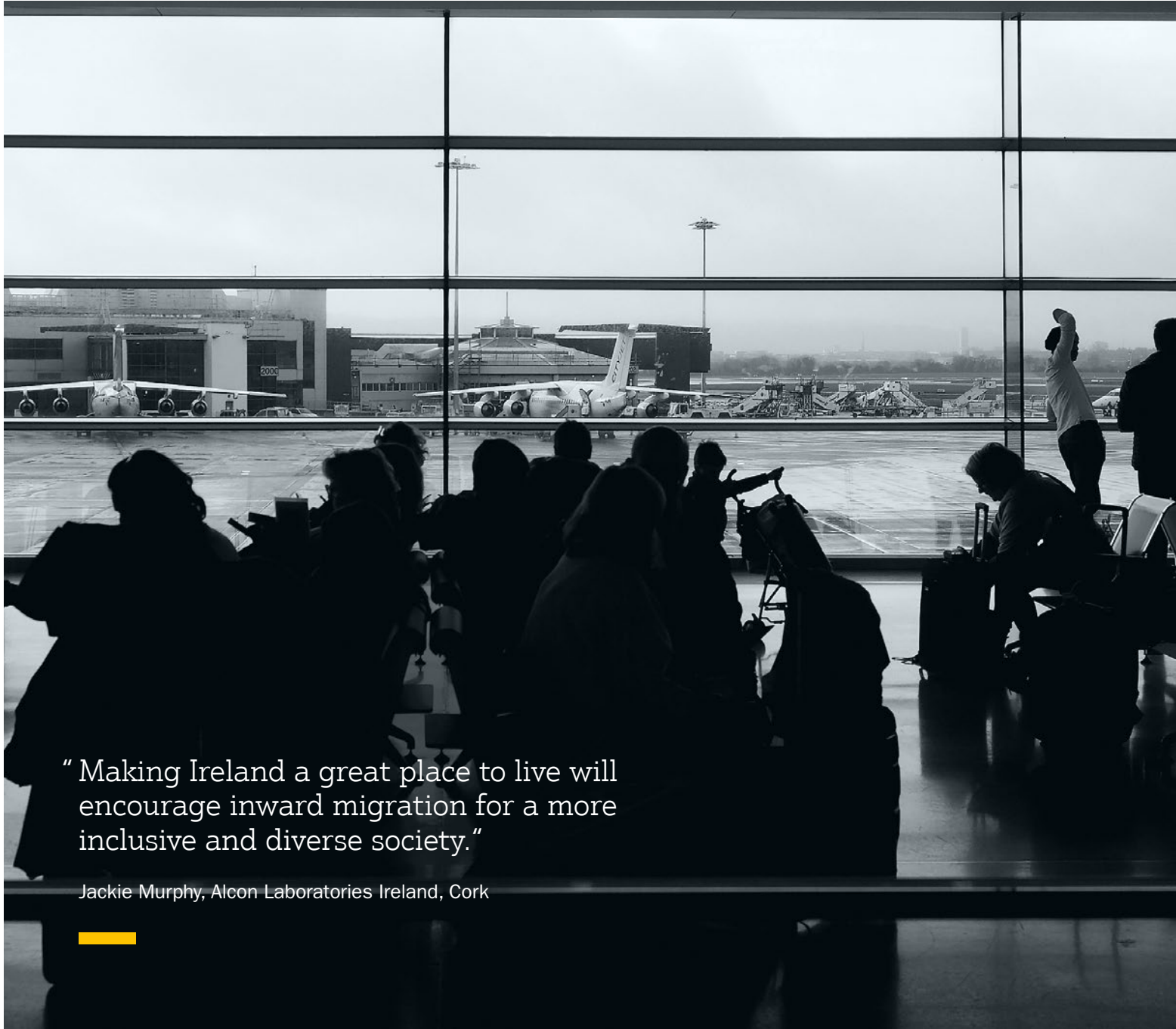
To sustain Ireland's economic success and remain attractive to local and global mobile talent pools, the country must offer a good place to both live and work. Unfortunately, following a period of economic recession and underinvestment, severe problems are emerging in terms of housing affordability and supply, rising congestion, and inadequate education and healthcare.

Providing solutions to these problems and building on the enormous opportunity our economic success has created are at the heart of Ibec's *Better Lives, Better Business* campaign. For prosperity and quality of life to go hand in hand, we need to build an Ireland that better manages economic growth and demographic change.



“Decisive, assertive, perhaps bold actions are needed, lest we risk leaving a new generation struggling and, at the same time, undermining our country’s attractiveness as a place to live, work and do business. Delivering on a long-term strategy for investment in housing, education and infrastructure with the right policies, the right incentives and the right climate, business can provide the economic boost to drive the country forward.”

Edel Creely, Trilogy Technologies, Dublin



“ Making Ireland a great place to live will encourage inward migration for a more inclusive and diverse society.”

Jackie Murphy, Alcon Laboratories Ireland, Cork





## Our aim

*Better Lives, Better Business* aims to make Ireland a better place to live and work by working with policymakers to address the challenges around Ireland's burgeoning capacity constraints. It is a comprehensive and co-ordinated campaign which highlights a suite of policy measures across four key pillars:

Increasing the supply of affordable housing

Delivering the right infrastructure on time and within budget

Overhauling the regime for planning consents and appeals

Embedding sustainability in business and development activity.

## Our approach

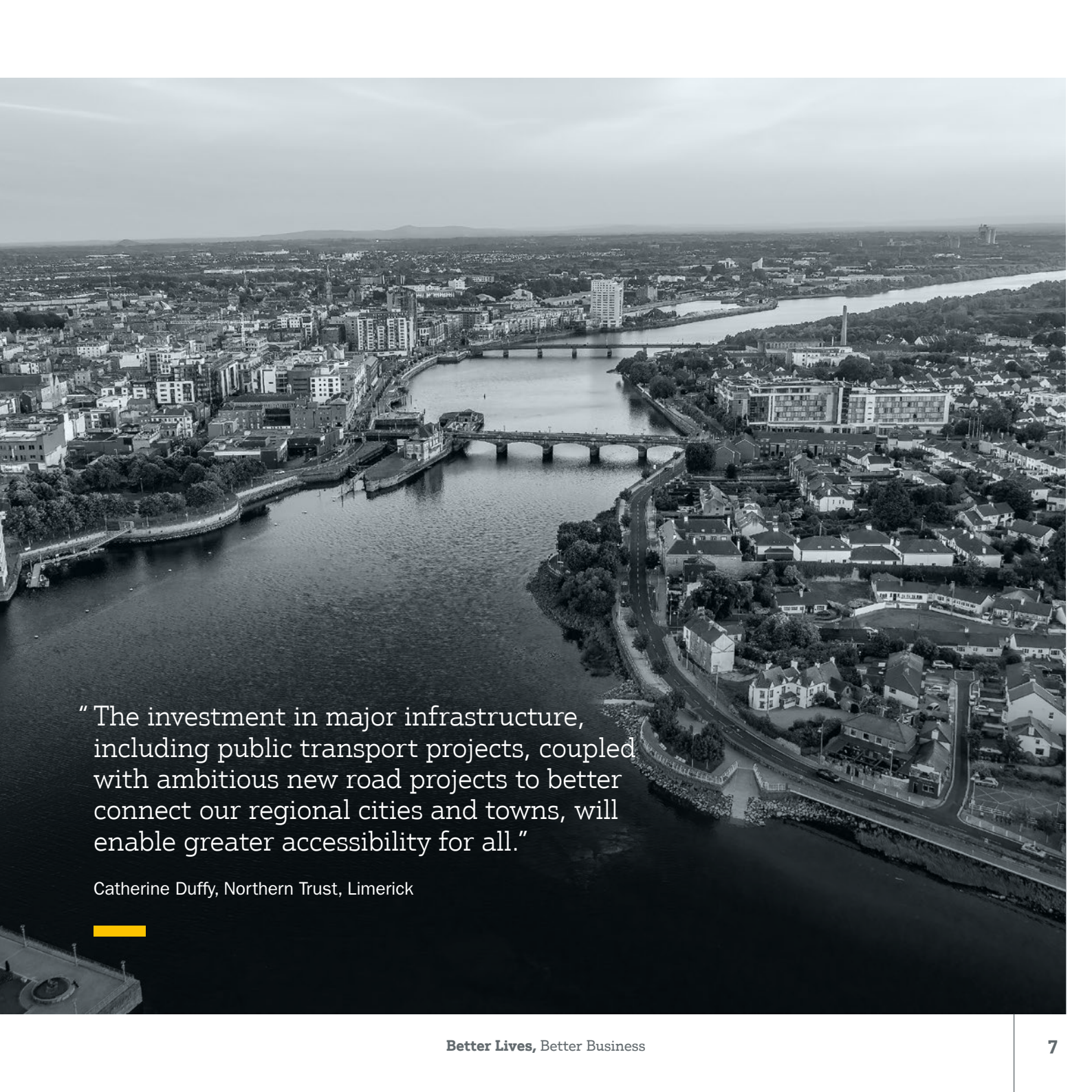
Ibec, on behalf of Irish business, is engaging in a substantial lobbying and communications effort for *Better Lives, Better Business* to ensure that our recommendations are understood, championed and implemented by Government. We will set out a range of innovative policy proposals aimed at strengthening Ireland's liveability status and contributing to the public and media debate on these issues. Although the scale of the challenges to be overcome are not to be underestimated, success in solving these problems offers significant opportunities for economic and societal rewards for decades to come.

“ Addressing the infrastructure deficit puts business in the best position to compete for talent and investment – let’s make Ireland an attractive place to live, work and do business now and in the future.”

Ger Brennan, MSD Human Health, Dublin







“The investment in major infrastructure, including public transport projects, coupled with ambitious new road projects to better connect our regional cities and towns, will enable greater accessibility for all.”

Catherine Duffy, Northern Trust, Limerick







Ibec's Better Lives,  
Better Business campaign  
focuses on four key pillars:

Housing

Infrastructure

Planning

Sustainability

“ We need a better supply of affordable housing  
which improves the quality of people’s lives  
and helps our business model.”

Anne Heraty, Cpl Resources plc, Dublin





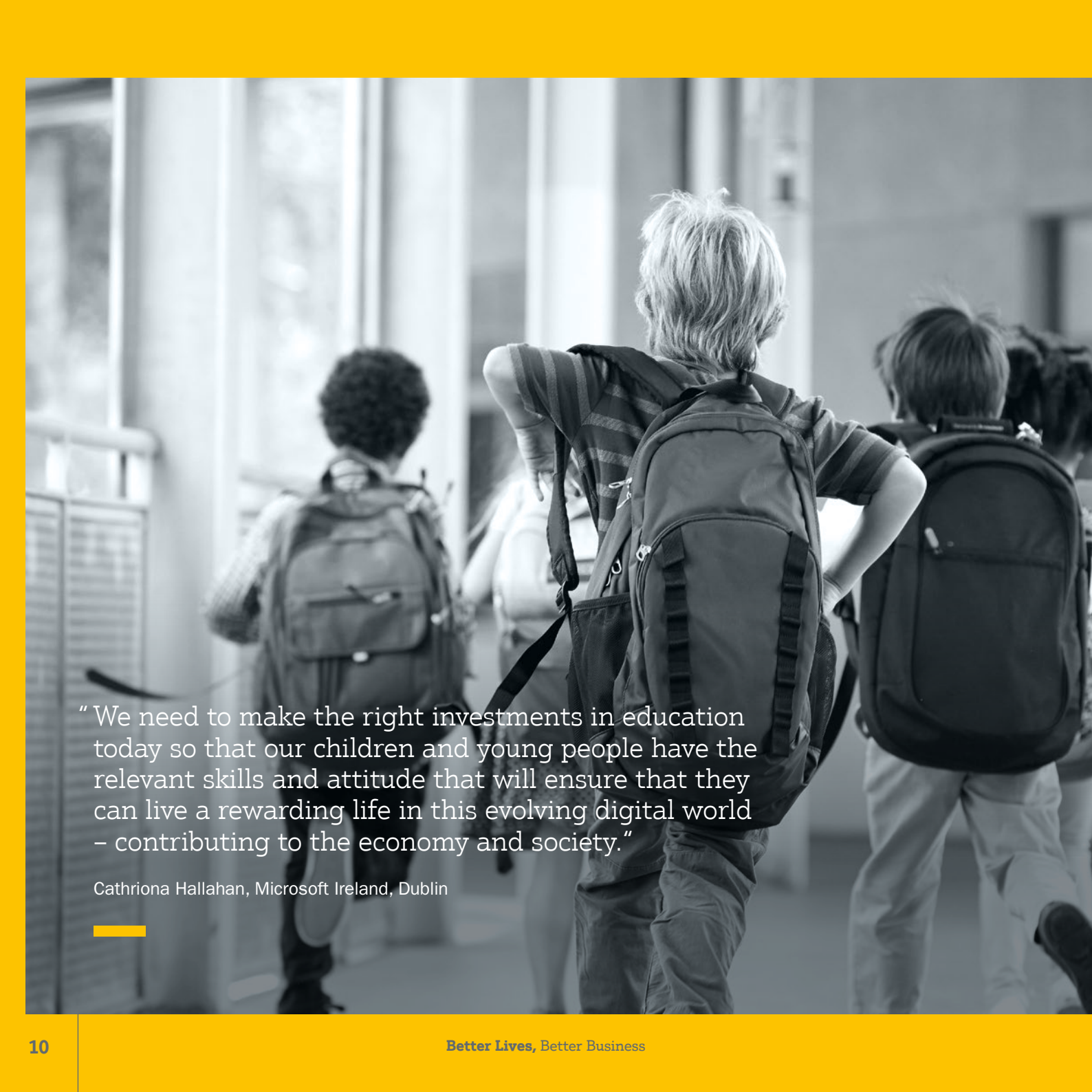
# Better housing

The housing pillar of the campaign prioritises an increase in the supply of affordable housing.

In addition to the social aspects of the housing crisis, a continued chronic shortage of affordable housing in Ireland is threatening to undermine the achievement of major economic policy goals. These include attracting inward investment, advancing third-level education, reducing emissions, and improving household incomes and people's quality of life.

Ireland's population is growing at a faster rate than the EU average, while average household sizes have further to fall to reach the EU average. Ibec estimates that these twin factors will drive new household formation of up to 36,000 per annum between 2018 and 2046.

Ireland's housing market is clearly not functioning properly and as presently constituted is incapable of meeting demand. Without remedial actions, the housing shortage will act as a barrier to entry for new investment and a disincentive to talent retention for existing workers who are unable to find suitable and affordable accommodation.

A black and white photograph showing the backs of several children walking away from the camera in a school hallway. They are all wearing backpacks. The hallway has large windows on the left side, and the lighting is bright, creating a slightly blurred background. The children are in the foreground and middle ground, moving towards the right side of the frame.

“ We need to make the right investments in education today so that our children and young people have the relevant skills and attitude that will ensure that they can live a rewarding life in this evolving digital world – contributing to the economy and society.”

Cathriona Hallahan, Microsoft Ireland, Dublin

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# Better infrastructure

The infrastructure pillar of the campaign aims to ensure the delivery of the right infrastructure on time and within budget.

Investment in public infrastructure is fundamental to creating the economic conditions necessary for long-term national prosperity. In recent years, public investment in Ireland has dropped to under 2% per annum of economic output, running down the country's stock of critical infrastructure.

The NDP has earmarked a €116 billion investment on priority projects over the period to 2027 and will see annual capital spending exceed 4% of economic output.

If delivered, the NDP will go a long way to remedying the chronic and pronounced infrastructural deficits that need to be addressed. However, Ibec believes that more needs to be done and that the NDP does not address all the key infrastructural deficits in transport and public infrastructure.

“Better functioning, sustainable and more vibrant towns and cities will really drive prosperity and a better standard of living for all. We cannot be complacent and must be ambitious in our longer term planning and infrastructure goals.”

Emmet Cronin,  
Jazz Pharmaceuticals, Athlone

# Better planning


Our campaigning on planning aims to ensure an overhaul of the regime for planning consents and appeals.

Ireland's infrastructural roll-out is hindered by an out-of-date planning appeals system, including judicial review, which remains slow and cumbersome compared to other developed countries. This results in delays to badly needed investments in clean energy, data processing, transport, and waste treatment. The dysfunctional nature of our planning system is now a threat to our economic development; could completely undermine the success of the National Development Plan (NDP); and is damaging our international reputation as a good location to do business.


Resolving the impasse will require a holistic solution involving local, regional and national State agencies, in addition to changes to the courts process.

“ A successful future for Ireland is critically dependent on our agility in realising our ambitions, particularly in education and regional infrastructure, both of which are key promoters of employee welfare.”

Seamus Hughes,  
Zeus Industrial Products  
(Ireland), Donegal








"Our ocean, our arts, our culture are leading draws for top talent retention and attraction. We have proven that Ireland's regions are capable of delivering on global innovation but to sustain this we must make planning laws effective and transparent, and execute on infrastructure plans effectively."

Maureen Walsh, DeCare Dental Insurance Ireland, Mayo







“ If Ireland is to restore its reputation and maintain its global green-tech advantage, we need to hit a ‘hard reset’ on our decarbonisation goals for 2030 and 2050. That will require clear policies and new targets that address our sustainability priorities and opportunities.”

Stephen Wheeler, SSE Airtricity, Dublin





# Better sustainability

The sustainability pillar of the campaign aims to embed sustainability across development and business activity.

A cleaner and more resilient environment brings both societal and economic benefits. As part of this commitment, Ibec is developing a roadmap for cost-effective decarbonisation of the economy over the period to 2050 that will help deliver improved air quality and less congestion. Through our participation on the National Water Forum, we will continue to support efforts to improve the quality of rivers, lakes and ground water, with associated benefits for tourism and sport.

We are also working alongside the Environmental Protection Agency to encourage waste prevention and resource efficiency. Ibec has conducted research to assess attitudes and intentions amongst CEOs regarding the European Commission's Circular Economy initiative. We hope to build on this through engaging with a wide range of businesses and stakeholders and to demonstrate strong thought leadership on the issue.

# About Ibec

Ibec is Ireland's largest lobby group representing Irish business both domestically and internationally. Its membership is home grown, multinational, big and small, spanning every sector of the economy. Together they employ over 70% of the private sector workforce in Ireland. Ibec and its trade associations lobby government, policy makers and other key stakeholders nationally and internationally to shape business conditions and drive economic growth. It has over 240 professional services staff in seven locations including Brussels and has 42 different trade associations in the group.

[www.ibec.ie](http://www.ibec.ie)

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