

An evidenced based approach is a fair and appropriate basis to evaluate the towns / cities of Ireland. The current classification of Drogheda in the draft document does not take into account the Greater Drogheda Area which shows figures from the 2016 census of over 83,000.

For considering the required supports to a town like Drogheda it is important to realise that it is the hub and economic driver for a population of 83k people with a growth rate from 1996 to 2011 of 78.77 which is 2.5 times the national growth rate for the period.

The final figure of 83,042 is also taken from Dr. Hughes' analysis of the census figures and represents the preliminary 2016 figures for the Drogheda L-B-M agglomeration and including the adjoining Meath and Louth rural areas. At this level, the region has a population in excess of the cities of Waterford (51,517) and Galway (76,778) and twice the population of the entire county of Longford.

Drogheda and surrounding areas need to be given the status it deserves, and allow it to compete on a level playing field, its already the largest town in Ireland, and should be at city status and brought into the top tier of the Ireland 2040 Our Plan to enable appropriate and considered planning for this unique location, on the east coast of Ireland which sits on the M1 corridor 35 Km North of Dublin City and 95 Km South of Belfast City.

Drogheda has developed as an alternative to Dublin in the past and will continue to do so into the future. The reason for this development is its proximity to Dublin, to Dublin Airport and to the commercial ports coupled with the level of road and rail infrastructural connectivity between the two.