

Submission to National Planning Framework

The Greater Drogheda Area – as a Primary Development Centre

Date: 9 Oct 2017

Niall Kierans



Dear Sirs

May I take this opportunity to add to comments previously submitted by myself.

In response to the first draft of the National Planning Framework, which failed to recognise Drogheda as one of the largest urban areas in the State, I wish to propose that Drogheda and its full surrounding urban area in both Louth and Meath be counted and administered as one single unitary urban area and designated as a **City & Primary Development Centre** in the National Planning Framework / Ireland 2040.

Drogheda's true size both in urban spread and population size needs to be represented more accurately in census data and national statistics which inform Government and Local Authority decisions on planning, resource allocation and prioritisation for public services and promotion of foreign direct investment. Drogheda's absence from the previous National Spatial Strategy should be addressed by nominating the full urban area as a City and Primary Development Centre in the National Planning Framework.

The recently published, 'Government Supporting Communities **Pobol Deprivation Index**' in conjunction with Compas Informatics, clearly show that the **Counties of Louth, Cavan and Monaghan underperform** relative to the regions of, the Greater Dublin area, the West, centred on Galway City, and Munster, centred on the Counties of Cork and Kerry. **See Pobal maps.ie**

Two recent comments in the Irish Times are somewhat relevant to the argument for the greater Drogheda area

*Frank Mc Donald, in reference to the impending Development Plan
‘Even Niall Cussen, principal planning adviser in the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, candidly stated recently that “major regional shifts are not really realistic.”
Oct 2017*

This in my mind would support the argument that an urban area, like Drogheda, that is well served with the necessary infrastructure and with a large available labour pool, that of itself requires FDI, lends itself for consideration for inclusion in any future State development plan

*It Times Opinion 2 Oct 2017
Dr Eoin O’Neill. Chartered planner and lecturer at UCD Earth Institute*

‘We must remember that Dublin was the only NSS location (gateway or hub) that achieved significant population growth during that plan,

(Drogheda, which was excluded from this plan, being a sole exception)

yet none of the “big ticket” high-capacity public transport investments (Metro North, Metro West, Dart Underground) outlined in Transport 21 – the transport investment plan announced in 2005 to align with the NSS – were delivered. As a result, Dublin has among the poorest levels of access to a high-capacity public transport system compared to its European competitor cities.

*While the plan acknowledges that inhibiting Dublin’s growth too much would undermine national growth, we need to avoid the emergence of a national competition between Dublin and the regional cities for infrastructural investment. **We must ensure investment is prioritised where the benefits are highest.**’*

This last line, in bold, supports the argument that Drogheda which has been neglected for decades requires attention at the highest level. Drogheda has the services, infrastructure and labour ready to tap into any future plans for growth and employment. These plans should accept the argument for inclusion in our States' 2040 plan and for granting City Status to the urban agglomeration that Drogheda has become.

Until the size and population of Drogheda is recognised properly through the recognition of its real status in the area it will not reach its full potential for the attraction of FDI. Drogheda is on a par in terms of surrounding infrastructure and location with parts of Fingal, such as Swords and the Airport Zone, and major urban centres such as Galway and Limerick but attracts much less Foreign Direct Investment.

Drogheda has the potential to be a major economic hub for the North-East region with a critical mass of employment opportunities which would end the daily commuting misery into Dublin City for thousands of people in the Louth/Meath/North County Dublin areas and reduce inbound traffic and rail line congestion on the M1/M2 and Northern Rail Line services.

As mentioned in my previous submission the reduction of commuters from Drogheda and district would obviously mean a major quality of life improvement for those commuters but would also reduce traffic volumes and pollution in the Greater Dublin Area with additional benefits our Nations Carbon Footprint.

Sincerely yours

Niall Kierans