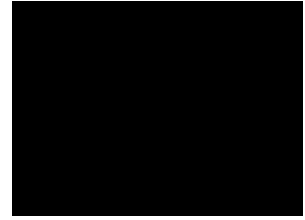


Mr. Donald Byrne MIEI



10/11/17

NPF Submissions,
Forward Planning Section,
Department of Housing, Planning,
Community and Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin D01 W6X0

RE: Submission on draft National Planning Framework

Dear Sirs/Madam,

I wish to make the following suggestions regarding the draft National Planning Framework document and its apparent omission of the largest “town” in the country Drogheda. For too long Drogheda has been ignored by successive governments indeed beginning with the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898 whereby Drogheda’s then central governance (separate to the counties of Louth & Meath which the town straddles) began to be de-constructed. Indeed the removal of corporations and replacement with Borough Councils in the Local Government Act 2001 and subsequent disastrous Local Government Reform Act 2014 further reduced the decentralised decision making from within the town to outside the town. In my lifetime I have seen the town decline from a proud self-governing area which attracted business to something which has been stripped of any semblance of proper planning and decision making to an area which cannot develop further without drastic re-thinking.

I believe the National Planning Framework needs to acknowledge Drogheda with its population (which straddles both counties Meath & Louth) as that of a metropolis on a par with the major cities in Ireland named Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford and thus should have restoration of a council and indeed be re-designated as a city within the early lifetime of the National Planning Framework. This would enable sustainable re-growth of Drogheda, attract inward investment and keep its young population like myself working and living within the town instead of moving abroad or having to create unsustainable travel patterns toward Dublin which is already bursting at the seams. Getting over the parish pump politics and shortsightedness of county boundary loyalties a city of Drogheda could straddle both counties without affecting peoples loyalties and thus the merits of the Drogheda Boundary Review report could be realised and not the puzzling decision not to extend the town boundary and rely on opposing councils or businesses to work together (something which would never happen in reality).

As an engineer having worked in Ireland and the UK I have seen how improper decision making has affected an area and also how visionaries within government can champion change for the long term good of the country. Drogheda has all the tools good motorway, rail and port links and heretofore had proper local governance but in removing that local governance and allowing the area to decline, population growth has continued and the towns natural spread (which does not follow county boundaries) continues unabated. Thus I now challenge the authors of this draft report to recommend and include for Drogheda as Ireland's largest metropolis be re-designated to that of a city with a central council to govern it and in doing so allow for sustainable growth, proper forward planning, inward investment which has benefits for our nearest city of Dublin in releasing pressure on its housing, rental, employment and infrastructure demands.

Regards,

Donald Byrne