

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

09/11/17

**RE: Submission of Regina Doherty TD to
Ireland 2040 – Our Plan – National Planning Framework**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please accept this correspondence as my submission to Ireland 2040 – Our Plan – National Planning Framework.

Introduction

Census 2016 results show that Ireland's population stood at 4,761,865 in April 2016, an increase of 173,613 (3.8%) since April 2011. The population of County Meath stood at 195,044 an increase of 5.9% over the five years. This increase is 155% of national levels which is the highest increase of any county in the country. Meath's population growth has resulted in Meath being the only county in the Greater Dublin Area to meet its 2016 population target as set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines. The following points raised have been informed by reports issued by CSO and by Meath County Council.

Employment

Employment growth has not matched the growth in population within County Meath. In 2011, there was a jobs to-population ratio of just 21%, compared with 40% for the country as a whole. The low jobs to population ratio in Meath illustrate the high incidence of outbound commuting from the County. 54% of people living in County Meath in 2011, commuted predominantly to Dublin for work each day. This equates to a net loss of 24,739 in the working population.

The Economic Development Strategy for Meath is aligned with the County Development Plan and Regional Planning Guidelines in that it recognises the key development and growth centres and the role of these centres in providing employment and services. 5 no. key strategic sites have been identified; Navan, South Drogheda, Dunboyne, Ashbourne, and Kells. It is intended that these sites

will be regional anchors for enterprise and employment growth in the County, and will reduce the need for residents of Meath to travel outside the County for employment. I am fully supportive of this plan.

Commuting

The majority of working commuters in Meath travel by car. 73.8% travel to work by car, compared to 65.6% of commuters nationally. Public transport users comprise 7.1%, compared to 9.3% nationally. Meath commuters commuting time is on average 122% greater than the National average, 19.3% of commuters spend an hour or more travelling whilst 4.5% have a commute of over 90 minutes.

The provision of Phase 2 of the Dublin-Navan Rail line is most critical to all residents of Meath East and would result in the provision of a sustainable mode of transport between the county and Dublin. The proposed route of this line should be reviewed so that Ratoath/ Ashbourne residents can avail of the service along with Dunshaughlin and Navan residents. The location of the proposed station in Dunshaughlin will be critical to the success of this line in providing alternative public transport to Dublin and to providing Ratoath/ Ashbourne residents the option of using this service.

I propose that County Meath and our neighbouring counties in the Eastern Corridor is lacking a piece of critical national infrastructure. On a daily basis the N2 is on an extraordinary amount of pressure with severe tailbacks for daily commuters.

I am gravely concerned that in the absence of a motorway on this channel of commuters cross multiple counties, our regional development may be inhibited.

It is my view that the continuing strategic development of County Meath cannot solely be served from an infrastructure perspective by the M1.

Here in Meath we are lucky to have a competitive business environment whereby we have attracted in recent years multiple international bodies to locate in the Royal County. This must be both embraced and supported through the continued development of our infrastructure. I propose that the investment in a motorway to alleviate the growing pressure on the n2 will do just that and will in turn attract more of its kind to Meath.

We recognised the need for an 'M2' almost two decades ago, and I believe that this should remain a high budget within Ireland's National Planning Framework so as to ensure the continues and welcomed progression of Meath's tourism industry, services, housing initiatives and new industry coming to the county.

Kind Regards,



Regina Doherty TD
Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection