



MISSION STATEMENT

To procure City Status for Drogheda to enable it's unique history, location and potential to be appreciated and promoted in industry, business, tourism, education, health and quality of life to the benefit and advantage of it's citizens and those of the South Louth and East Meath region.



78 George's Street

Drogheda, Co Louth

Tel: [REDACTED]

14 March 2040

Minister Simon Coveney TD

Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

Dear Minister Coveney

RE: Submission "Ireland 2040 - Our Plan"

We were pleased to meet you on your recent visit to Drogheda and also in Maynooth when you announced your plan "Ireland 2040 Our Plan".

We are very anxious that Drogheda gets full considered treatment and accordingly enclose our Submission. As you know we have been working with Dr Brian Hughes for a number of years to achieve our vision as presented to you in this our Submission.

With the excellent knowledge and insight of Dr Hughes we believe that our Submission is strongly evidence based and if adopted will bring great benefits to Drogheda and the North East region.

With every good wish

Yours sincerely

Vincent Hoey - Chairman

Anna McKenna - Secretary

IRELAND 2040 OUR PLAN



National Planning Framework

**Anna McKenna
78 George's Street
Drogheda**

Submitted on behalf of

Drogheda City Status Group

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Councillor Oliver Tully



Member Louth County Council

Cllr Oliver Tully

Mayor

Borough District Drogheda

NPF Submissions
Forward Planning Section
Department of Housing, Planning,
Community and Local Government,
Custom House
Dublin 1, D01 W6XO

10th March 2017

A Chara

As Mayor of Drogheda I wish to support the submission made by 'The Drogheda City Status' group on the National Planning Framework.

Strategically Drogheda is placed along the east coast within 30 minutes of the centre of Dublin, our capital city. Drogheda is serviced by the M1 motorway and the Dublin Belfast railway, has its own very busy sea port and is serviced by the national gas interconnector.

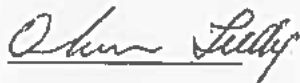
There is an abundance of fresh processed water and there is ample capacity in the sewerage treatment plant for a significant population increase. On the Southern environs of Drogheda, Meath County Council prepared a Local Area plan 2008- 2014 for a population growth of 8,500 people while Louth County Council has prepared a Master Plan for the Northern Environs of Drogheda for a population growth of 20,500. Both of these area plans identified the necessary infrastructural requirements to compliment both plans, which are significant. As such Drogheda should be viewed as a unique region with such a significant planned increase in population growth.

The educational infrastructure in the Drogheda region has benefited from significant investment over the last few years and is continuing to improve but will require further investment as the planned developments progress. These expansions in the educational system for the Drogheda Region have been identified as part of the National Development Plan in January 2007 by the School Planning Section Department of Education and Science in the draft Area Plan for North Dublin, East Meath and South Louth and the 2007 Planning Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area.

It is important that all of the relevant documentation to support Drogheda and its environs is studied properly in the context of the National Planning Framework. Documents of significant relevance to the National Planning Framework in the Drogheda region are the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2011-2017, the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 and the Meath County Development Plan.

It is crucial that Drogheda's case for treatment as a growth centre and City Status is trenchantly made and understood. If this opportunity is missed Drogheda will be left behind and lose out on Government support, investment and resources. It is important that the Drogheda region becomes a growing and thriving area to allow Drogheda achieve its undoubted potential. This will help shape the direction of Drogheda evolving from Ireland's largest town into Ireland's first City in the North East.

Mise le Meas



Clr Oliver Tully
Mayor
Borough District Drogheda

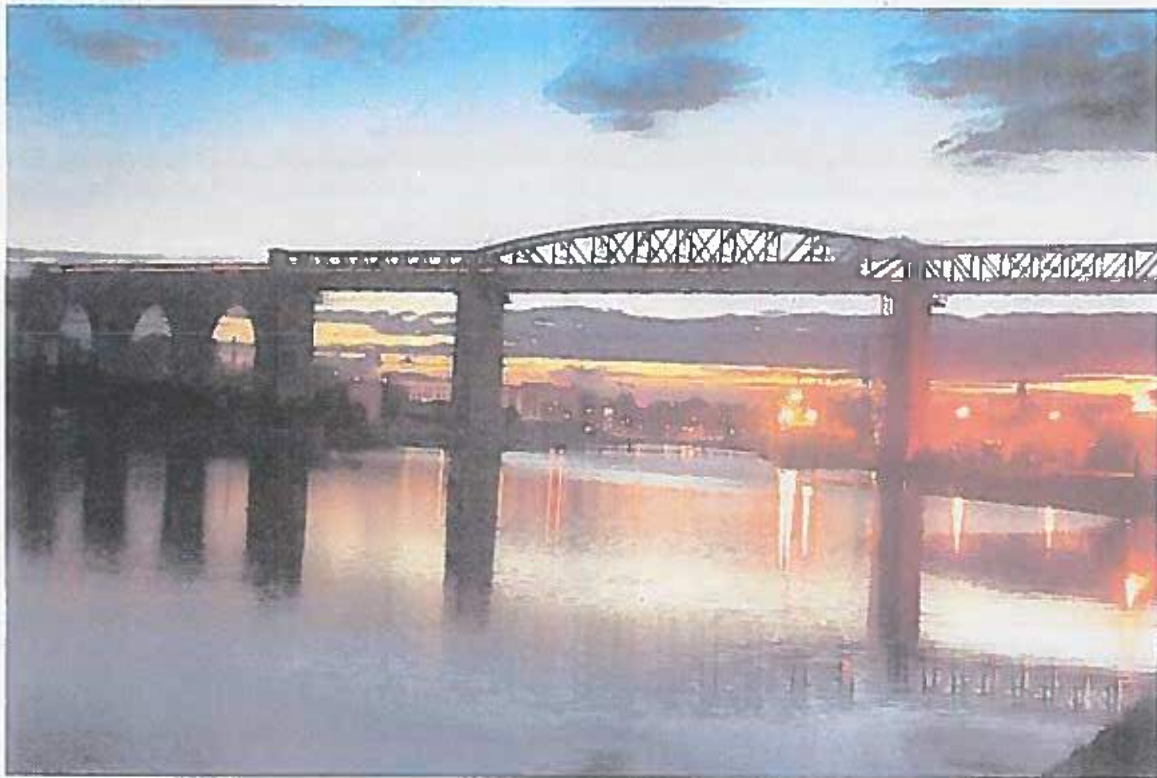
INTRODUCTION

A City for the North East

This submission is presented by **Drogheda City Status Group** a body of concerned citizens who, six years ago, set about achieving recognition of Drogheda as a City and National Growth Centre.

Mission Statement of Drogheda City Status Group is as follows:

“To procure City Status for Drogheda to enable its unique history, location and potential to be appreciated and promoted in industry, business, tourism, education, health and quality of life to the benefit and advantage of its citizens and those of the South Louth and East Meath region.”



Drogheda City Status preliminary study came to the conclusion that Drogheda's problems stemmed from the lack of understanding and appreciation by policy makers of the importance and potential of the town and region.

It became clear to us that policy makers in Dublin shared this flawed view of the Drogheda region and its proper status.

Drogheda, Ireland's largest town, (formerly a county in its own right) has been a centre of importance for upwards of 800 years. It has been a Corporate Borough with its own Mayor, Alderman and Burgesses for all that time until recent local Government reform. Proudly situated on Ireland's most historic river and Gateway to the Boyne Valley, its port has been a life line with Europe and the rest of the world. Drogheda has a unique position in the North South Dublin - Belfast corridor with exceptional transport infrastructure, i.e. main railway line Dublin to Belfast, M1 Motorway and the proximity of Dublin airport and ready access to Dublin Port via the Port Tunnel.

The Drogheda hinterland contributes to its importance and attractiveness with the coastal communities of Mornington, Bettystown and Laytown south of the Boyne and Baltray, Termonfeckin and Clogherhead north of the river. It is surrounded by the great fertile lands of Counties Louth and Meath and the beautiful Boyne Valley to the West. It is also the major social, commercial and economic centre for a ring of growing towns and villages in its hinterland, ie Stamullen, Donore, Julianstown, Gormanstown, Donacarney, Duleek, Slane, Collon, Monasterboice, Tullyallen, Dunleer and Tinure.

The amazing history of Drogheda and the Boyne Valley, both pre and post Christian, sets it apart in its unique archaeological and historic treasures and with enormous tourist potential.

The town has a great long industrial tradition and led the country again in the growth of new industry in the 1930's, 1940's, 1950's, 1960's and 1970's. While some of the industries have closed there is a growing appreciation by industrialists of Drogheda's attractions and in recent times a number of new firms have commenced ie Eastcoast Bakehouse, Boann Distillery and Brewery and Statestreet.

The latest of these firms to set up is Mobile Technologies Inc (MTI) who is establishing a European Headquarters contact in Drogheda employing 150 workers. Speaking at the announcement Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD said:

"This is a great announcement by Mobile Technologies Inc., bringing 150 high skilled jobs to Drogheda. Driving investment into Regional locations is a key focus for me. This investment will be of considerable benefit to Drogheda and the Border Region, providing a significant boost to employment and benefitting the economy of the town and region."

CEO of IDA Ireland Martin Shanahan said:

"the high quality jobs created by the company will have a positive knock-on effect on the wider region and will promote Drogheda as an ideal location for conducting international business."

As a further example we quote Michael Carey, Managing Director of Eastcoast Bakehouse as follows:-

"Drogheda was selected for this new business for a number of reasons:

- a. Drogheda has network of highly successful food and drink businesses. Such a network has provided real and meaningful support during the early stages of the establishment of the business, providing advice, introductions and other support.**
- b. The road network around Drogheda is unique. While many of the employees at Eastcoast Bakehouse are local, some travel from other towns. Travel to and from the Bakehouse is very easy. Similarly, transportation of ingredients and delivery of finished product to our Irish retail customers (or to the ports) is highly efficient.**
- c. Availability of skilled employees in Drogheda is excellent. When it was announced that the initial group of 25 Bakehouse production staff were to be selected, we received over 2,500 applications in just a couple of weeks. Many of the applicants were already in employment, but were interested in being part of this start-up given its location (avoiding a long commute).**

- d. **Availability of suitable premises.** When considering locations, a key requirement was to find an industrial building of the right size and shape. A number of available suitable buildings were identified in Drogheda.”

All of this has happened and population has grown despite Drogheda not being prioritized in the last National Spatial Strategy 2002.

Truly Drogheda is a place with a distinguished past with a great growth future if properly perceived, planned, managed and supported.

We have felt that in the **National** as well as local and regional interest it is important to change the perception of this great town by procuring city status as Ireland’s sixth city and recognition of its potential as a National Growth Centre.

We commissioned Dr Brian Hughes, PhD, MSc Hons. (Spatial Planning), Dip Envir.Econs., F.S.C.S.I., F.R.I.C.S., FeRSA, MSSISI, Chartered Planning & Development Surveyor, consulting in Urban Economics and Demography, (at Drogheda City Group’s own expense), and we have had the benefit of his extensive research and reports.

In March 2012 Drogheda Borough Council passed a resolution.

“That the members of Drogheda Borough Council from this day forward give their consent and approval to the people of Drogheda referring to Drogheda as the City of Drogheda”.

It is our understanding that “Ireland 2040 Plan” is in effect the Government’s implementation of its **“PUTTING THE PEOPLE FIRST”** document.

Ireland - 2040

The Minister, Simon Coveney has produced a Draft Plan inviting a new planning framework for Ireland for the next 25 years.

This Draft Plan acknowledges that "the extra population and homes will happen in the East Coast" and further that "this will present major challenges around lop-sided development, under-used potential, congestion and adverse impacts on people's lives and the environment".

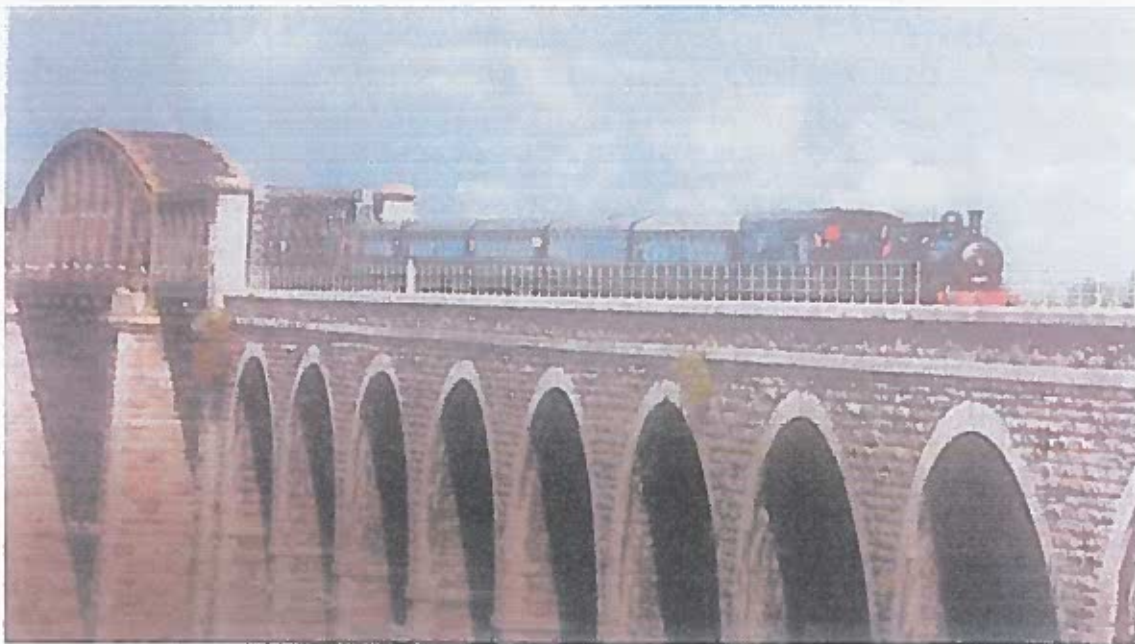
If this population increase is foreseen for the Eastern Region (and by implication is undesirably to be located entirely in Dublin) we submit that a vibrant and flourishing City of Drogheda (by far the biggest town in the Country) at present should be an **obvious major contributor** to the solution of the undesirable challenges identified by the Minister's plan. This is particularly the case as Drogheda town and hinterland is experiencing exponential growth which is mirrored in the growth explosion of the surrounding villages and towns.

Major growth has been shown to be focused on Cities and this strengthens Drogheda's case for City Status and Growth Centre for a separate region from Dublin.

We submit that Drogheda has unique advantages for growth and in the National and Regional interest it should be identified in the new plan as a major growth centre with City Status. Substantial growth has been shown to be focused on regions having a city as there centre.

We set out here-under our vision and our reasons why this opportunity should be grasped and why scarce resources invested in Drogheda Region will prove to be money well spent and create a dynamic and attractive regional city focused on the Louth Meath region helping (inter alia) to solve Dublin's problems and exploiting all Drogheda's advantages in the **National Interest.**

Infrastructure and Facilities



1 Drogheda's Boyne Viaduct, once one of the wonders of the world but now sometimes overshadowed by the vast array of modern infrastructure available to the City of Drogheda

When considering areas suitable for the creation of sustainable communities consideration must be given to the level of infrastructure existing and that required to be provided from the public purse in the pursuit of that policy. In this respect, Drogheda and district would have a considerable advantage ahead of many other centres. The infrastructure provision in Drogheda has been ahead of its time, despite the lack of recognition provided by the previous plan. This level of existing provision provides an excellent basis to start with the infill infrastructure required for the development of a sustainable growth centre which will not compete with Dublin but will run in parallel and in doing so reduce the pressure on the capital allowing both centres to develop to their full potential.

When considering Drogheda, and the elements which have proven a strong draw for residential communities in the past decade we have to be aware of both the natural occurring infrastructure and the infrastructure which has developed as a result of private or public investment.

The natural occurring infrastructure in the region exists in abundance and provides a backdrop to the quality of life afforded to residential communities in the area. These elements include the wealth of heritage afforded by Drogheda's position as gateway to the Boyne Valley including treasures such as Newgrange, Oldbridge and the Battle of the Boyne site all within walking distance for the town centre. Within the town centre we also have the Millmount complex, one of the worlds finest Martello Towers and Laurence's Gate, one of the best examples of a Barbican Gate embedded in remaining sections of the ancient town wall to mention but a few. We also have the majestic Boyne River and the associated flora & fauna, and the extensive beaches of Laytown, Bettystown, Mornington, Baltray and Cogherhead. It would be impossible to put a monetary value on these assets but you can be

assured that the cost to replicate them in an alternative location would be prohibitive to the extent that it would be considered impossible. A further element of a naturally occurring asset is Drogheda's proximity to Ireland's Capital, Dublin. Located 40km North of Dublin City Centre, Drogheda is sufficiently close to the capital, with significant transportation links, to allow Drogheda residents enjoy the cultural and commercial activities within the capital without the cost and difficulties associated with living in the city.

The developed infrastructure in Drogheda and the region is no less impressive and breaks down into the spheres of, Transportation, Data Connectivity, Healthcare, Education and public utilities.

In the area of transportation Drogheda boasts it's own commercial sea port providing access to all international ports and handling in excess of 1 million tonnes of product annually. Drogheda's train station is on the Dublin-Belfast line and is a high speed rail line which currently provides 34 trains each way, each day between Dublin and Belfast with some journey times down to 32 Minutes. The capacity of this line is only limited by the capacity of the DART section between Howth Junction and Connolly Station, this DART limitation could be removed, if required, by an adjustment of headroom lengths to international norms.

Drogheda, like many other centres is well served by motorway infrastructure with considerable retained capacity due to recent expansions from Lissenhall to the M50 however unlike other centres our M1 motorway infrastructure not only links Drogheda to the M50 and Dublin within 25 minutes but also links Drogheda directly to Belfast, Ireland's second largest city only 60 minutes away. Drogheda also benefits from having 5 dedicated intersections off the motorway (Junction 7 to Junction 11) providing efficient access to the northeast, northwest, west, central and south Drogheda.

Probably the most appealing aspect of Drogheda's infrastructure is the availability of an international airport located just 25 minutes to the south, again many centres will indicate similar proximity to airports however for the consideration of the development of an international business it is not just the airport but the availability of direct flights to their parent city. Dublin Airport, on Drogheda's doorstep, boasts direct flights to 185 destinations in 41 Countries on 4 Continents and businesses located in Drogheda have easier access to those flights than any other comparable centre. Even Dublin city due to it's traffic congestion cannot boast such ease to international connectivity.

In the current modern business world, secure fast data connectivity is essential and in this respect, whilst other centres are catching up Drogheda is leading the field in relation to data connectivity with in excess of 100MB fibre connections currently available to the business and residential community and 1GB connectivity into some business centres. In addition to the necessary high speed connectivity Drogheda can also boast an additional benefit to companies where security of connection is essential, and that is the level of redundancy provided by providers operating on more than one network. In many centres even though there may be numerous providers they are sharing a single network with the potential that a network failure could result in a loss of service, a second network has been

brought into Drogheda by Virgin media allowing security of continuity for critical data operations even with a catastrophic failure on one network.

In the area of healthcare, Drogheda's status in this area has been progressing over the past decades, with the Lourdes Hospital serving as the regional hospital for the North East providing acute, emergency, maternity, oncology, palliative and infective disease medical care among others. The hospital is affiliated to the Royal College of surgeons. In addition to the regional hospital Drogheda is served by numerous primary care facilities and nursing homes providing the required full range of care required.

The educational infrastructure in Drogheda and the region has benefited greatly by being classified as a high growth centre by the Department of Education. This has resulted in a significant level of continuing investment in schools and facilities at all levels in the area and the development of state of the art Primary and Secondary school campuses. In addition to Drogheda's local college of further education the secondary school leavers from the area have an array of college facilities available to them including DKIT, DCU, UCD, DIT and Trinity with direct train or bus services to these centres.

The final area of infrastructure available to Drogheda is public utilities including Electricity, Water and Wastewater, and waste disposal. The development of these utilities has allowed for significant capacity to accommodate a population in excess of 100,000 people without a requirement for expansion. The municipal wastewater treatment plant in Drogheda was developed in 2004 and upgraded in 2007 to provide primary, secondary and tertiary treatment for a population equivalent of 100,000 persons. The water supply and treatment facilities in Drogheda are similarly operating at significantly less than capacity to the extent that it is capable of facilitating large areas of Meath also with high quality potable water. Drogheda is also fortunate to have the Indavar incineration plant located on our doorstep providing a facility to sustainably dispose of all refuse arising which cannot be recycled and to feed the extracted energy back into the national grid.

In the consideration of the development of growth centres in Ireland it is essential that Drogheda, which already has the required infrastructure in place and is a desired location for residential and commercial development, be considered ahead of other centres where additional financial resources need to be expended and excessive encouragements are required to force development.

Addendum to section on Infrastructure and Facilities

The recent announcement that the local authority had be advised to apply for funding to build the new northern cross route is a hugely positive announcement for the following reasons

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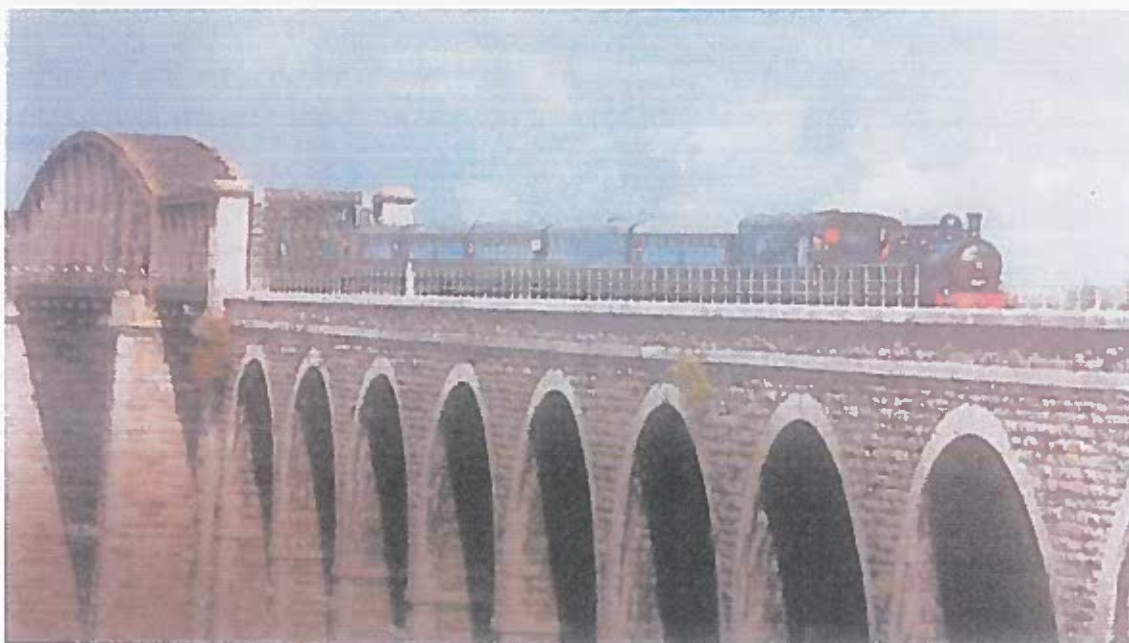
2 This will reduce pollution and enhance the shopping experience and ease of access for the local population and visitors

3 It will encourage more port business due to easy access to the M1 motorway

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In the area of healthcare, Drogheda's status in this area has been progressing over the past decades, with the Lourdes Hospital serving as the regional hospital for the North East providing acute, emergency, maternity, oncology, palliative and infective disease medical care among others. The hospital is affiliated to the Royal College of surgeons. In addition to the regional hospital Drogheda is served by numerous primary care facilities and nursing homes providing the required full range of care required.

The educational infrastructure in Drogheda and the region has benefited greatly by being classified as a high growth centre by the Department of Education. This has resulted in a significant level of continuing investment in schools and facilities at all levels in the area and the development of state of the art Primary and Secondary school campuses. In addition to Drogheda's local college of further education the secondary school leavers from the area have an array of college facilities available to them including DKIT, DCU, UCD, DIT and Trinity with direct train or bus services to these centres.

The final area of infrastructure available to Drogheda is public utilities including Electricity, Water and Wastewater, and waste disposal. The development of these utilities has allowed for significant capacity to accommodate a population in excess of 100,000 people without a requirement for expansion. The municipal wastewater treatment plant in Drogheda was developed in 2004 and upgraded in 2007 to provide primary, secondary and tertiary treatment for a population equivalent of 100,000 persons. The water supply and treatment facilities in Drogheda are similarly operating at significantly less than capacity to the extent that it is capable of facilitating large areas of Meath also with high quality potable water. Drogheda is also fortunate to have the Indavar incineration plant located on our doorstep providing a facility to sustainably dispose of all refuse arising which cannot be recycled and to feed the extracted energy back into the national grid.

In the consideration of the development of growth centres in Ireland it is essential that Drogheda, which already has the required infrastructure in place and is a desired location for residential and commercial development, be considered ahead of other centres where additional financial resources need to be expended and excessive encouragements are required to force development.

Transport

Drogheda has **unique accessibility** by reason of its situation on the M1 motorway and on the main North South railway line together with its Port and proximity to Dublin airport and easy access through the Port Tunnel to Dublin Port. There are also plans for a new railway station on the North side of the town and the possibility of a Dart extension to Drogheda.



Education

Drogheda serves as the headquarters for the Louth Meath Education Board and also serves as the centre of education for the residents of the town and hinterland areas we seek to include in the Boundary Extension, namely, Drogheda Grammar School, St Oliver's Community College, Our Lady's College, Greenhills, St Joseph's Secondary School, Sacred Heart Secondary School, Ballymakenny College, St Mary's Diocesan School, Colaiste Na hinse, Laytown, Scoil Ui Mhuire, Dunleer, Ardee Community College and Gormanstown College, Co Meath, with student populations of 7,364 made up of residents of both Louth, Drogheda and Meath and currently provides cohesion within the greater Drogheda community.

The number of Leaving Certificate sittings in 2016 in County Louth was 1791.

Drogheda is favourably situated for attendance by third level students at universities at Dublin and the Regional College in Dundalk. It is anticipated that out-reach courses from the Universities will be provided in Drogheda in the near future.

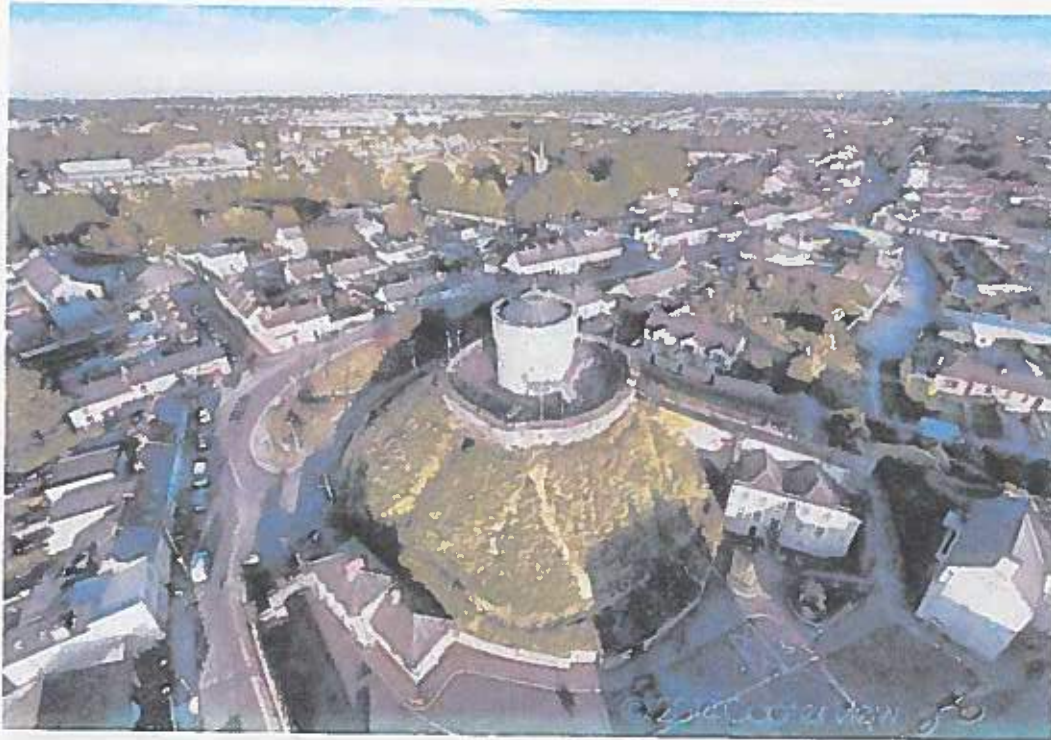
Tourism



A city in the region would be a focus for the tourist development of the Boyne Valley as yet not nearly realised but with huge potential. Drogheda is the centre of Ireland's most historic and archaeological area situated as it is astride the Boyne and Gateway to the Boyne Valley described by the late TK Whitaker as a "magical area".

The Treasure Trove of attractions of Drogheda and the Boyne Valley include Monasterboice with its round tower and the finest three Celtic High Crosses in the country, Mellifont Abbey with its impressive remains of the first Cistercian Abbey in Ireland, the Newgrange Tumulus a World Heritage Site, the tumulus at Knowth and the cairn at Dowth, the site of the Battle of the Boyne and the Interpretative Centre at Oldbridge, the Ledwidge

Museum at Slane, the Hill of Slane where St Patrick lit the Pascal Fire, Slane Castle, the Round Tower at Donoughmore and all the way to Trim with DeLacy's famous castle.



The town of Drogheda is of great historical interest. Besieged twice and stormed by Cromwell in 1649. Several Parliaments were held here, Poyning's Law being passed. Many storied ruins include the famous Laurence's Gate, Magdalen Steeple, Millmount, etc.

The site of the Battle of the Boyne is of great tourist potential with the stone base of the Oblisk erected after the Battle still existing. The site is of great interest to the Orange Order whose supporters have acquired a site of 40 acres on which the Oblisk was erected. They have met with local interests (including the City Status Committee) with a view to re-erecting the Oblisk to commemorate the Peace Process.

Sporting and Recreational Facilities



Because of its wonderful situation close to the coast Drogheda enjoys the amenities of the coastal resorts of Mornington, Bettystown, Laytown, Baltray, Termonfeckin and Clogherhead with their lovely sandy beaches. There are **three championship golf links** who often host important National and International competitions.

Water Sports: proximity to the coast and the availability of the River Boyne provides ideal locations and facilities for all kinds of boating and water sports as well as fishing.

Sporting enthusiasts are well catered for with the fine GAA ground being upgraded to the County Ground, Drogheda United is a premier League of Ireland club with plans for a new modern stadium and the Rugby Club have their own ground.

Boyne Trail: Plans are advanced for the delivery of the **Boyne Trail** a 16.5k cycle and walkway from the Boyne Estuary at Mornington to the World Heritage Site at New Grange passing through beautiful scenery and along the towpath of the old Drogheda to Navan canal which hopefully will be re-opened for navigation in due course.

Arts and Heritage and Entertainment

Drogheda is an attractive place to enjoy an excellent quality of life. It has all the usual places of entertainment such as a multiplex cinema, three theatres, a very important award winning art gallery, a number of Drama Groups, a fine Arts Centre, an abundance of restaurants, cafes, hotels and licensed premises. The fine St Peter's parish church contains the famous Shrine of St Oliver Plunkett.

Shopping

The old attractive centre of the town with its ancient streets and welcoming shops serving the town residents, hinterland inhabitants and visitors alike. There are also a number of shopping centres on the town periphery.

Housing

Drogheda and its hinterland is an attractive place to live which explains its ever growing population.

Plans are already in existence to erect a new Bridge over the River Boyne to improve access to the Drogheda Port and Harbour and to open up access to substantial lands for the erection of up to 10,000 new dwellings on what is called "The Northern Cross Route".

Many people of necessity commute daily from the region to Dublin to work. This adds to Dublin's congestion problems. Undoubtedly these people would prefer to live and work in the Drogheda region if and when employment is provided.

Conference Centre

Drogheda is an ideal location for Conferences because of its accessibility and the provision of a Conference Centre is being actively considered.

Health

Drogheda is particularly fortunate in having Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, one of the largest hospitals in the East of the country, serving a catchment population of 350,000 people. It is the Regional Trauma Unit and Level 3 Paediatric and Obstetric Unit for the North East. It has one of the busiest Emergency Departments in the Country with in excess of 60,000 presentations annually.

Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital (LOL) is a recognised teaching and training hospital for medical and nursing staff and accredited for such purposes by many of the affiliated bodies such as the RCPI, RCSI etc. It is the largest hospital in the North East Region and is the centre for Trauma, Obstetrics, Paediatrics and Neonatal Medicine.

The current structures were mainly built in the 1950's, but include elements from the 1990's, and most recently from the last decade, when the current Phase 1 block was completed. This recent structure houses the Emergency Department and three floors of Ward accommodation.

The Phase 2 development currently in progress on the campus will consist of:

- Ground Floor, accommodating an extension to the existing Emergency Department which will incorporate an extension to the Paediatric treatment area, an increased space for treating Minor Injuries, Rapid Access and Treatment and enhanced treatment facilities for complex care including Resuscitation.
- Three Ward Floors configured as single room accommodation to comply fully with SARI guidelines. (Funding approval is awaited for one level).
- A Theatre Suite comprising five fully compliant operating rooms. (Funding approval is also awaited for these).

The block will extend to approximately 9,000 single metres and will be linked to the existing Phase 1 block and the main tower block of the older part of the Hospital. The construction of shell only units at present for one of the Ward Floors and the Theatre Suite is due to central funding constraints, however completion is anticipated once funding becomes available.

The expected cost of the whole development is expected to be in excess of £30 million. The anticipated completion date is expected to be 3rd Quarter 2017.

At present Our Lady of Lourdes hospital employs a staff of 2088 and is a 307 bed Acute General Hospital incorporating a Regional Trauma Orthopaedic service and Louth Meath Neonatal Intensive Care and Paediatric services. Surgical Services include general Surgery, Orthopaedics, Urology and Gynae including early pregnancy assessment unit. ENT. Medical services include General Medicine, including sub specialities of Cardiology, Endocrinology, Diabetes, Gastroenterology Oncology, Dermatology, Elderly Medicine, Respiratory Medicine, Microbiology, Pathology and Palliative Care. Regional Trauma Orthopaedic service including fracture clinics. Joint Department of Anaesthetics between Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda and Louth County Hospital. Emergency Medicine services; Emergency Department (ED); The ICU/HDU/CCU; Acute Medical assessment Unit. Maternity Services, Paediatric; Neonatal Intensive Care; Oncology Day Services Unit.

Nursing Homes

There are a number of Nursing Homes in the Drogheda area and two substantial new Nursing Homes are already planned to meet the anticipated requirements to 2020.

The growing Drogheda region with its population explosion clearly calls for proper local Government administration and governance centred on the City of Drogheda. Drogheda City as it expands will assist in the orderly growth (which is already happening) of its large hinterland containing many expanding growing towns and villages and rural areas and provide support for the residents.

We envisage a Drogheda Region as a Sub-Region of the Eastern Region to ensure more effective planning in this highly populated and important region.

The growth of tourism in Drogheda and the Boyne Valley will encourage the creation of small service businesses to service the tourist requirements.

There is such a cultural heritage, natural habits and beautiful countryside in this region that enlightened and sensitive planning is required and **best provided** by a strong and visionary **Local Government** centred in Drogheda.

To quote Dr Hughes "Drogheda, Ireland's largest freestanding town, is and will continue to grow dynamically because it is an attractive place to live in, is strategically placed in the Dublin-Belfast Corridor and not least, because of its proximity and accessibility to Dublin, to the airport and the M50 employment zone. Its **own size** will also contribute to further organic population growth where its demographics are very positive and promising for the Greater Drogheda Area. It is vital that such growth is complemented with employment growth, which is the most important issue for Drogheda's people.'

We have seen examples of how Drogheda was ignored, e.g. in the Spatial Strategy where Ireland's largest town was not even given Gateway Status. Another example was the recent allocation of €150 million Enterprise Fund where towns such as Carlow, Sligo, Clonmel, Waterford and Dundalk were beneficiaries and Drogheda again was overlooked. It should be noted that Drogheda is the only town in Ireland to which a toll applies for motorists entering and exiting the town. A most discriminatory position.

Drogheda is bursting at the seams and has expanded far beyond its existing boundary. To all intensive purposes Drogheda is a City and in Plan 2040 it should be treated as a City with all the Regional and National benefits that will flow therefrom.

Agglomeration

We are convinced that the medium to long term objective is to have an extended administrative area south of the River Boyne to mirror the current administrative Drogheda areas on the north of the Boyne which includes: Termonfeckin, Tullyallen, Baltray and Tinure which if mirrored would incorporate Mornington, Bettystown, Donacorney and Donore into the greater Drogheda area. This increase in population would provide endless possibilities in respect of status, funding and provision of services with need for proper local government and planning which would also position Drogheda as a valid recipient of City Status as per European requirements. This would make Drogheda Ireland's newest city as advocated by Dr Brian Hughes.

In the north south corridor the British Government have recognised the importance of Newry and Lisburn by giving them City Status – why not Drogheda which is much larger than either of these.

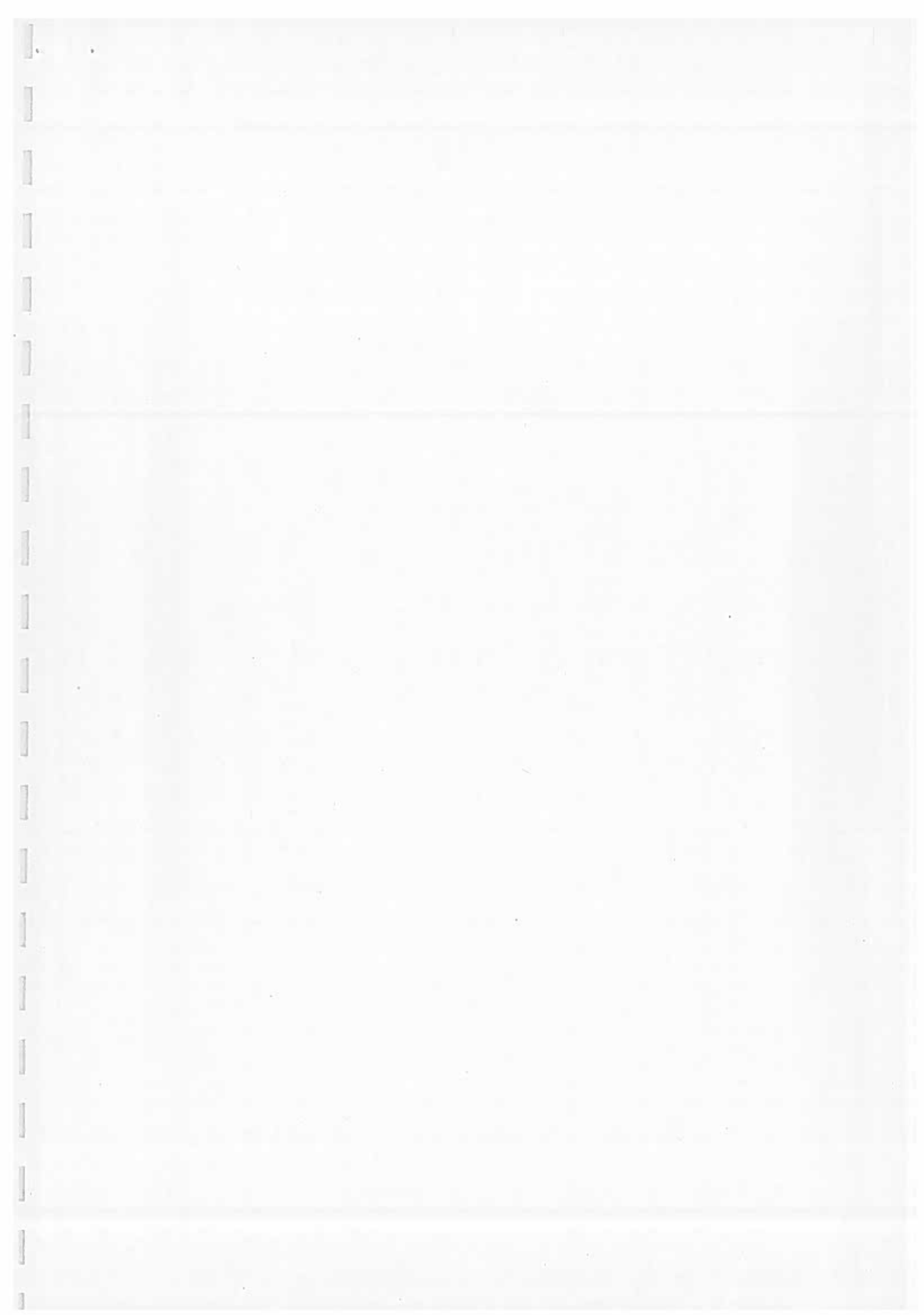
We would stress that Drogheda is the only stand alone settlement that adjoins another large town of 10,000 plus population, ie, Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington. It is unique because it is now physically linked to this other large town which itself is bigger than Enniscorthy, Wicklow, Tramore or Cavan.

We attach report from Dr Brian Hughes which makes a cogent case for the agglomeration of Drogheda with Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington and for the granting of City Status for Drogheda.

We would respectfully suggest that the “Ireland – 2040 Our Plan” National Planning Framework, in the National interest would support our ongoing case for the granting of City Status for this growing and important area.

The advantages of having a city in the North East region will be beneficial to Counties Meath and Louth but will also give support to the economies of Counties Cavan and Monaghan.

Drogheda is the right place and this is the right time for its potential for sustained development to be recognised and planned. It will give a great return and a healthy and vibrant lifestyle for its citizens and those of the Region and help to alleviate Dublin's problems in the National Interest.



APPENDIX

Dr Brian Hughes - Report

Unbalanced Regional Development and Agglomeration in 2016 - the provision of some Demographic Insights for Irish Cities and Growth Settlements to inform its Spatial Planning Framework

© Dr Brian Hughes

Abstract: *The Central Statistics Office Preliminary Results for the 2016 Census confirms acceleration in the pattern of the unbalanced growth in Ireland's population. A marked contrast in the east-west divide reflects a concentrations of 'lumpiness' for consolidated urban expansion in the east with evidence of centripetal agglomeration for the faster growing cities.*

Such urban growth contrasts with declines in many rural electoral districts, principally in the BMW area. Census results also confirm that regions without cities or large towns are struggling to maintain population and continue to be more vulnerable to net outward migration. Their county contribution to natural growth - births less deaths - is also weaker, reflecting older age profiles. The selection of growth centres under the now defunct National Spatial Strategy (NSS) reflected poor decision-making: some Gateways and Hubs continue to stagnate or even decline in population, viz. Sligo.

The spatial policy of Balanced Regional Development (BRD) has created a proliferation of villages and small town settlements, of one-off housing and associated elongated travel distances. BRD is also inefficient as per that policy's eight-point objective, to provide equal resources to 'everyone in the audience'. It is likewise wasteful of capital investment and is detached from 'top-down' initiatives, sought by the EU.

This first paper provides an initial analysis overview, confirming headline 2016 demographic outcomes in advance of official census results, due from early-mid 2017 onwards. These data also provide early indicators of provincial population outcomes. Such demographic trends must influence the direction and thrust of the replacement plan to the NSS, both in the drafting of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and in reconfiguring the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG).

The development of Ireland's cities and selected larger settlements must provide the strategy imperative for future accelerated growth. Divergence and tensions between planning and political objectives is inevitable, but with due attention paid to the emerging demographic data from this recent census combined with rational and effective decision-making for spatial conflicts - this evidence-based approach will always be in the best interest of strategic planning implementation.

1. BACKGROUND - ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND POPULATION DYNAMICS:

In their 2013 edition of *Economics of Agglomeration - Cities, Industrial Location and Globalisation*, Fugita, M. and Thisse, J-F. (2013) state: *Economic activities are not concentrated on the head of a pin nor are they spread evenly over a featureless plain. On the contrary, they are distributed very unequally across locations, regions and countries.* This fundamental does not reconcile with the National Spatial Strategy (2002-2020) definition of Balanced Regional Development (Appendix 2).

Ireland's Preliminary 2016 census results dated 14th July 2016 contain a number of surprises. First, the overall population increase of 169,724 for 2011-2016 is about twice the level interpreted from the published annual CSO Population and Migration Estimates (P&ME). The 2011-2016 period of *net* out-migration, totalling 28,558, was much less than had been expected; offset with natural growth (births less deaths) of 198,282. This annual population increase of 33,945 is equivalent to almost 600 per week. The P&ME shortfall of 84,276 compared with the 2016 Census 2016 will be the subject of a "thorough analysis" by the CSO in 2017. That overall outcome masks severe provincial emigration.

Nonetheless, a return to the State's net in-migration direction probably occurred in 2015 rather than 2016 and its reversal was much sharper than the 2016 P&ME Release of 23rd August indicates, particularly for the city regions. That 84,276 (larger than a full Croke Park attendance) difference with the census figures calls into question the P&ME methodology and its usefulness, or confusion - with its ever-increasing divergence pattern as the census year approaches. Fortunately, the differences between the Preliminary and the Final census results is of a much smaller order, wherein for the 2011 census the Final State population figure was just 6,983 higher of the Preliminary results. It is observed that the Planning Regions with cities show the widest divergence between the two sources of CSO figures.

The Preliminary 2016 Census also indicates sharp differences in both the provincial Natural Increase and Migration dynamics, reflecting their contrasting provincial contributions. Leinster, including Dublin comprises nearly 55% of total State population and during 2011-2016 it accounted for 74% of total population growth. In the 2011 census, the demographic centroid for the entire island's population was located just two kilometres north-west of Maynooth in County Kildare. As the following data will show, the centroid position continues to move in an easterly direction. Leinster's share of net out migration was just 6.2% in contrast with over 65% for Connacht and the three Ulster counties. Because of such imbalances and for an analysis of this Paper's provincial context, Dublin is separated out from the rest of Leinster to become the fifth, *cuigu* 'province' as is fitting to the literal, native description, as is set out in the following Table 1:

Table 1: Provincial Performance - Population Numbers

5 Provinces:	Census 2011 Pop.	Preliminary 2016 Pop.	2011-2016 pop. Growth and % contribution	5-year % growth	% surface area of State
Dublin	1,273,069	1,345,402	72,333 = 42.62%	5.68%	1.35
Rest of Leinster	1,231,745	1,285,318	53,573 = 31.56%	4.35%	27.26
Munster	1,246,088	1,280,394	34,306 = 20.21%	2.75%	35.12
Connacht	542,547	550,742	8,195 = 4.83%	1.51%	24.74
Ulster (part)	<u>294,803</u>	<u>296,120</u>	<u>1,317 = 0.78%</u>	<u>0.45%</u>	<u>11.53</u>
Ireland	4,588,252	4,757,976	169,724 = 100.00%	3.70%	100.00

Source: Brian Hughes analysis of CSO 2011 Census and 2016 CSO Preliminary Data

This first Table confirms similar population sizes, for Dublin (city and county), for the remaining eleven Leinster counties and for Munster. Connacht plus the three Ulster counties comprise 65.77% of Dublin's 2011 population size. Table 1 also highlights in the right-hand column, the striking 2011-2016 growth differences and sharply dis-improved population performances contrasting Dublin and the smaller-populated provinces, especially when they are compared with the State's overall growth. Population densities are not explicitly shown above: Dublin City and County is 21 times the density of Rest of Leinster, 27 times Munster and 43 times that of Connacht + Ulster (pt.). It is instructive to compare the percentage contribution to population growth with the surface area percentage.

The next set of figures addresses the provincial contrast in the components of population growth (natural growth and net migration) in the make-up of Ireland's demographic growth performance over the past five to April 2016, thus:

**Table 2: Demographic Components of Ireland's Population Growth
- 2011-16**

	5-year % growth	Natural Growth (Births- deaths)	NG as % Of 2011 pop.	Out-migration (In-migration)	Out-migration as % of 2011 pop.
Dublin	5.68%	64,406	5.06%	(7,927)	-0.62%
Rest of Leinster	4.35%	64,695	5.25%	11,122	0.90%
Munster	2.75%	41,084	3.30%	6,778	0.54%
Connacht	1.51%	18,579	3.42%	10,384	1.91%
Ulster (part)	<u>0.45%</u>	<u>9,518</u>	<u>3.23%</u>	<u>8,201</u>	<u>2.78%</u>
Ireland	3.70%	198,282	4.32%	28,558	0.62%

Source: Brian Hughes analysis of CSO 2011 Census and 2016 CSO Preliminary Data

This Table highlights significant differences between the natural growth (NG) for both Dublin and the Rest of Leinster, in contrasts with the much poorer NG performances of the other provinces, therein reflecting wide population age profile and compositional differences, including lower rates of family formation away from the all-Leinster area. For instance, in Q1 2016 the natural growth of Fingal is almost equivalent to Connacht plus the Ulster Counties. These data also contrasts the inward migration, which is confined to Dublin, with net out-migration position for the other 'provinces' - that is except for Cork and Galway cities and their environs. Urban-rural growth differences and wide variations in population densities are also evident from the data for the growth trends of both Tables 1 and 2.

The absence of cities in both size and growth contexts, *vide* for Ulster (part) and for Connacht, with the exception of Galway and its sphere-of-influence, is stark. Sligo, puzzlingly, one of the NSS-selected 'Gateways' has again regressed and its 2016 population likely to be lower than its 2002 level - the start date for the NSS; an outcome that is very disappointing, given its important central place function and its positive Daytime Working Population count for the 2011 census. Letterkenny is now larger than Sligo, reflecting its relative proximity to a much larger settlement, Derry.

Perhaps the most significant evidence-based reality of the processes of urban agglomeration and city size is that Dublin was able to buffer against net emigration, even in times of a deep and elongated recession. It is probably the case that at least some of Rest of Leinster's high out-migration moved into Dublin, in responding to its sustained job-creation demand, although residential property values and rents in the capital would be expected to create wider affordability barriers in this respect. In contrast, the two small provincial cities of Munster, Limerick and Waterford, were unable to prevent significant emigration, although Cork and to a lesser extent Galway were influential in counteracting the losses experienced in the rest of the western part of the country. It is instructive to next examine the east-west divide of the State's demographic growth contrasts.

2. Ireland's East-West Divide:

In the consideration of Ireland's growth contrasts the third Table focuses on the eight Planning Regions so as to analyse the east-west population size and growth in a divide line; from Youghal northward to approximately Clones. This separates the Border Region into its three eastern and three western counties (with all of Cavan included in the East Border area).

Table 3: East Regional Population Growth - 2011-2016

	2011	2016	Growth	% growth
Dublin	1,273,069	1,345,402	72,333	5.68%
Mid East	531,087	559,404	28,317	5.33%
Midlands	282,410	291,941	9,531	3.37%
South East	497,578	511,070	13,492	2.71%
East Border area	<u>256,563</u>	<u>265,740</u>	<u>9,177</u>	<u>3.58%</u>
	2,840,707			
East of State		2,973,557	132,850	4.68%
South West	664,534	689,750	25,216	3.79%
Mid-West	379,327	385,172	5,845	1.54%
West	445,356	453,413	8,057	1.81%
West Border area	<u>258,328</u>	<u>256,084</u>	<u>-2,244</u>	<u>-0.87%</u>
	1,747,545			
West of State		1,784,419	36,874	2.11%
	4,588,252			
State		4,757,976	169,724	3.70%

Source: Brian Hughes analysis of CSO 2011 Census and 2016 CSO Preliminary Data.

NOTE: The full Border Region's corresponding population totals during 2011 and 2016 are: 514,891 in 2011 and 521,824 in 2016, resulting in a 6,933 growth which is 1.35 % uplift for that region's population growth. It is observed that all of Louth accounted for just over 79% of that region's growth and the Drogheda + Louth Rural Area's growth of 2,020 (*vide* Appendix 1) excluding the Meath Rural Area, compares with just 1,455 in aggregate, for the net population growth of that region's other five counties. Likewise, another of that region's county, Cavan, the south of which is also within Dublin's sphere-of-influence, grew by 2,909 in 2011-2016, as per these CSO preliminary census results.

3. Strategy Spatial Planning Initiatives:

Specific to Ireland's east-west divide is the dynamism of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) - in combining Dublin with the Mid-East Region. The GDA now has more than 1.9 million people. In 2016 and for the first time ever it has more than 40% of the State's population. The GDA itself is now more populous than all of Northern Ireland, which reached an estimated 1.86 million people in 2016. Significantly, from the monitoring of CSO Quarterly Vital Statistics (2011-2016), the GDA now accounts for half of the State's natural growth of births less deaths.

The most recent CSO Vital Statistics for Quarter 1 2016 confirms the GDA share of Natural Growth was 51.87% as against 48.13% for the Rest of State.

Throughout the world, the single most important economic driver for modern society is the city unit; this is also critical to Ireland's strategic national spatial policy framework. In a demographic context for the island, the size difference between both Dublin and Belfast, in contrast with much smaller provincial cities of the entire island, requires to be urgently addressed in spatial policy formulation.

In the modern economy this is driven by the radical transformation of the definition of 'work', added value, knowledge transfers and to the effects of the locational clustering of activities. It has to be cautioned that a city's size is generally determined by its specialisation function Henderson (1974), and to the phenomenon of 'edge cities', Garreau (1991). The extent of infrastructural development remains vital to the task of counteracting city congestion.

Spatial policy direction needs to focus on achieving critical mass, recognising the role of sectoral clusters of economic activity in generating urban agglomeration. For Ireland replacing the fatuous objective of Balanced Regional Development with the dynamic policy of centripetal agglomeration or as the World Bank- Zoellick (2009) describes it, as 'lumpiness', thereby having fewer but much larger-populated growth centres.

Other malign effect of the failed policy of Balanced Regional Development (BRD) has been the proliferated in the numbers of villages and small town settlements, increasing in number by over 200 since 2002, as confirmed in the CSO Census Area Volumes. BRD is economically profligate in its illusory policy objective of 'Potential', in the quest to provide equal resources to 'everyone in the audience'.

Planning strategy needs to focus on selecting proven settlement winners, demographically, given Ireland's debt burden, its low density and economic vulnerability. This has a particular relevance for Ireland's land-use/ transportation interface. It is also pertinent to the spatial agglomeration objective of 'competitiveness' in replacing the politically-driven 'distributive' mandate of uneconomic dispersion, O'Leary (2003).

Future strategic capital investment needs to be concentrated in selected growth centres, with particular policy emphasis placed on the obligation to grow Ireland's provincial cities. Regions without cities are and will continue to stagnate in demographic terms as they are singularly unable to avail of the scale economies - ones that are characteristic of utility and public service provision together with employment specialisation and sectoral composition - attractive to FDI and larger indigenous activity, increasingly clustered in

concentrated locations of dense city and larger settlements. Essentially, in being able to create the resources to distribute to the periphery.

Size of Settlement matters because in the NSS (2002) the six smaller Gateways (Sligo, Letterkenny, Dundalk, Athlone, Mullingar and Tullamore) their combined make up of population that is only 63.5% of that of Cork, *Twice the Size* (2007) Summary: P. 7.

4. Discussion:

These 2016 census Preliminary Report data confirms that Ireland's strategic spatial policy approach will need to adopt and provide for population imbalance as a reality! Density is the new 'buzzword' and the objective to create urban lumpiness is imperative for the aforementioned interface.

The future focus for spatial planning needs to recognise provincial city growth as the way forward. Regions without thriving cities are and will continue to stagnate and will lose population in the absence of adequate Central Place-type employment. Some of the rural regions reflect a defective population structure, due to age profiles and lower family formation. Their inevitably lower rural employment opportunities also present economic 'drag' compounded by scale diseconomies in utility and service provision. Fingal's natural growth comparison with Connacht+Ulster is instructive.

Core-periphery agglomeration, *vide* Robert-Nicoud (2006), shows that a dynamic 'core' region can compensate the 'periphery', thereby providing growth levels to both areas, more so than if bottom-up distribution of economic activity alone, elusively seeks to create a policy of 'balance' for all areas as was characteristic of the failed NSS. This is particularly relevant to Ireland where Dublin is a multiple of the aggregate population of the State's provincial cities. The population drain as recorded in so many of the rural electoral districts would be even greater were it not for their provincial city's capacity and the 2011-2016 record of absorbing these surplus rural populations, principally within their travel-time distances, as reflected for example, in the components of growth for the cities of Cork and Galway.

Reflecting on Ireland's strategic special policy legacy for the issue of provincial city size, how much greater would have been that very capacity to staunch Regional population losses, had Buchanan been implemented in 1969 and if these cities were now in the 250,000 to 500,000 size category as against their average size of only 105,000?

First-world expanding cities enhance national competitiveness, combat rural diseconomies of scale and promote cluster-type opportunities arising from the changing nature of 'work'. However, during 1960-2000, the rank size order relationship for world cities has remained steady, Henderson and Wang (2007), points to the difficulties in seeking to reduce the population size differences for strategic planning. Nevertheless, the targeting of economic clusters is achieving success in some Irish cities, albeit with the difficulties in achieving rank-size change and demographic proportionality.

Galway's emerging clusters now include Medical Devices, Pharmaceuticals and Research from its third-level colleges. The province of Munster has a critical growth role to play in future planning strategy implementation because it contains the three other provincial

cities: yet its entire population has been overtaken by the Rest of Leinster during 2011-2016. Thus, Dublin's spill-over effect is that much greater than the aggregate of Cork, Limerick and Waterford, as the data from Table 1 confirms. These examples confirm the immensity of the task in achieving proportionately higher growth for these cities.

Expanded cities enhance national competitiveness, in combatting rural diseconomies of scale and in promoting the arising opportunities from the changing nature of 'work'. This opposite strategic policy - to promote Ireland's provincial cities and thereby promote 'lumpiness' - is logical as the alternative solution: to manage the near one-million-plus and the ever increasing size-difference between Dublin and the provincial cities. During 2011-2016 these cities have shown that they can help offset the flow of net outward migration from their own regional population. As confirmed in the above data, during times of economic downturns larger cities are better able to counteract job losses and outward migration from expanding spheres of regional influence.

5. The Challenge :

The Preliminary 2016 Census results confirm for the first time in recent decades, the encouraging fact that all five of Ireland's cities grew faster than their surrounding counties, thereby exhibiting early evidence of agglomerated centripetal consolidation. Regretfully, the increases in Headship Densities reflect the almost-complete absence of house building during 2011-2016. Limited residential construction during this period was focused in rural one-off houses, home refurbishment and house extensions.

Despite the 2015 demographic movement reversal and welcome return to inward migration, the current Irish accommodation crisis will inevitably dampen the prospects for supply-push non-indigenous in-migration volumes, and indeed, is likely to be further curtailed by new inward movement strictures that may be imposed on these islands by BREXIT.

As was shown above, Dublin city and county is now more populous than the eleven-county Rest of Leinster area. Together, they comprise nearly 56% of the State's population. In 2011 Dublin City was 2.55 times the aggregate population of the other four cities of the Republic; a gap that continues to grow - as are suggested by the 2016 Preliminary Census Electoral District out-turns. Failure to promote 'top-down' policy initiatives, with adequate capital infrastructural investment, e.g. delaying further the N20 motorway project linking Cork with Limerick: all of these policy omissions and failures will inevitably contribute to Dublin's population size-difference becoming even larger, with the unavoidable prospect of Ireland becoming a singular city-state in the second half of the 21st century, Hughes PhD (2010). The 1969 prophetic ghost of Buchanan's Regions yet remains to be exorcised!

The objective of achieving and maintaining Central Place functionality will remain elusive and without significant spatial policy intervention current diseconomies-of-scale will prevail. The Krugman *et al.* (2001) 'Sustain' and 'Break' points of New Economic Geography's *Bifurcation Models* will be more difficult to attain. Without long-term provincial city growth Alonso's *Urban Economics Inflection Points of City Size* will not proceed beyond point 'B', Fig. 2.12 Balchin (1995:46). Irish planning strategy must now address this appalling vista and reality of regional stagnation. Regions without thriving

cities must not be allowed to be the norm to be slavishly driven by the concept of 'balance'.

Settlement selection is and will continue to be critical to the implementation of successful spatial planning. The 23 NSS-designated Gateways and Hubs should be reduced in number by about one-third through a clinical, evidence-based process of picking 'winners'. Otherwise the critical mass of Ireland's major settlements will remain perpetually unobtainable as limited capital investment is driven by EU constraints on spending and on National Debt. Critical Mass population thresholds are greater in service cities than in industrial ones. Without 'winners' some planning regions will continue to have no cities whilst dynamic regions will see new city formation.

From this brief summation of the provincial-level dynamic of Ireland's recent population performance and the challenges for future planning strategy, the second aspect of this presentation focuses on identifying one such growth-centre 'winner'. The emerging east coast city comprises Ireland's largest town in 2011, Drogheda together with the State's 35th largest town, Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington (LBM). This research analyses their urban agglomeration progress informed by relevant datasets together with commentary, reflecting the 2016 preliminary census update.

Indicators of Agglomeration: The application of Population Density Grids to Assess Growth Momentum in Identifying the Emerging City of Drogheda with Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington (LBM).

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August 2016**

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This second research paper presents the application of population density grid analysis in applying the 2015-published Harmonised European Union (HEU) methodology to this emerging east-coast city. The combined Bibliography for both papers, as presented, is set out at the end of this Paper.

Abstract:

In earlier research literature this author deployed both population size and daytime working population data as measures of potential settlements, for selection as comparable growth centres for the National Spatial Framework, vide Hughes (2013). An identified problem, encountered in defining urban settlements and that of their spatial extent, is the dilemma of opposites; of being able to distinguish between the physical 'separation' and the agglomerating 'contiguity' of discrete settlements.

Focusing on linear distance as its principal 'separation' measure, the United Nations provides a limiting description, for separation, in the task of quantifying singular urban fields of agglomeration and thus in identifying processes of city formation. In contrast, The World Bank advocates three 'D's' which, in addition to Distance and Division, includes Density (2009). Particularly for Ireland as a sparsely-populated country, this latter measure assumes particular importance, especially given its scarce number of large settlements and their linear distances from each other. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) now has the facility for grid-enabled data, which can be used in distinguishing between examples of scattered morphology of sparsely-populated ribbon development in contrast to that which can identify densifying urbanisation cores.

Prior to the availability of the 2016 final census population results, this paper now investigates and applies population grid data measures based on the CSO grid-based demographic data from the 2011 census. Applied to a real-life example, this technique facilitates the further research objective of identifying Ireland's emerging city, the east coast agglomeration of Drogheda with Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington (LBM).

In its census of 2011, the CSO adopted the United Nations updated convention for Settlement distancing in its application of the '100 Metre' rule for settlement separation. This is applied to habitable buildings, including both residential and non-residential structures. Prior to 2011 the linear distance was 200 metres.

The rationale for its use is ...to avoid the agglomerating of adjacent towns caused by the inclusion of low density one off dwellings on the approach routes to town. CSO 2011 Census, Area Volume, Appendix 1. The GDA together with County Louth - which has Ireland's two largest towns, Drogheda and Dundalk - this area comprises the Republic's two million-plus population share of the dynamic Dublin-Belfast economic corridor area; in all, this corridor comprises just over 50% of the island's 6.65 million people.

Analysing the agglomeration of LBM with Drogheda and in comparing this with that of Blackrock (Louth) with Dundalk, on the basis of the EU Grid criteria, this Paper concludes by noting the need to distinguish between physical separation and that of physical agglomeration and proximity densification under the new Harmonised European Union (The Graz methodology), especially for governance and local administration purposes in this new Putting People First era of local governance rationalisation.

1. Census Geography - Applied Measures:

The CSO's evaluation of settlement size is set out in their *Population Classified by Area Volumes* of recent census results *vide* Appendix 1, *Census Geographic Definitions*, PP. 151-155, CSO (2012). It applies the linear distance rule for confirming settlement separation, applied so as to distinguish between a densely-populated urban field and an adjoining elongated ribbon of mainly housing development that often occurs on access routes to a defined city or town settlement. The objective is to provide definitive and regular-shaped settlements, thereby defining their footprints from their surrounding rural morphology.

Such measures for 'division' are effective in statistically isolating discrete new urban areas such as Bearna from Galway and the Balrothery separation from Balbriggan, resulted in creating these new town settlements in 2011. However, the application of such tests on their own, for cases of emerging urban agglomeration are inadequate, especially where two settlements are expanding towards each other and wherein, the provision of shared, linking infrastructure, the momentum of development is designed for and is resulting in emergence of a densified agglomeration, thereby producing a much larger unified settlement, albeit as one that may have more than one central core.

The opposite effect from an inappropriate application of the '100 Metre' rule can serve to ignore or overlook cases such as the emergence of bi-centric, adjacent settlements that are in a process of agglomerating and which are thus forming a larger settlement. One conspicuous example of an Irish failure to 'see the wood from the trees' is that of Drogheda's progress in its agglomeration with nearby Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington (LBM) wherein yet another Local Government boundary adjustment has been initiated in late-2015, confined to Drogheda, with the objective of facilitating its local government administration. Yet, there is no recognition of the bigger, emerging picture, of Drogheda's agglomeration with LBM.

2. Impending Urban Boundary Changes and Local Governance Issues:

Notwithstanding Ireland's unusually low level of urbanisation - with a 2011 share of just 62.05% of its population living in settlements of 1,500 and over - its urban development 'catch up' process is resulting in both population growth and a spreading of its urban settlements. Accordingly, many of its cities and towns are experiencing outward growth wherein its towns and environs are spreading beyond former administrative boundaries. Thus existing settlement boundary lines are being breached with successive waves of outward development. Whereas in the census of 1996 the CSO listed twenty settlements whose population overlapped into another county, by 2011 that number had extended to twenty-eight settlements, *vide* Appendix 4 *Ibid.*, *Populations of Towns or Environs/Suburbs which are located in more than one county*. For modern-day local government administration, such geographic expansion presents particular difficulty driven by the over-riding objective to manage single-settlement administration within a one county authority.

The frequency of such county-boundary 'straddling' now requires a more inclusive treatment for local governance purposes than this existing, blunt, solution of adjusting county boundaries. In implementing local governance reform since the 2011 census the first-phase in the current processes of local government has focused on the rationalisation and merging of county and city units, sometimes with considerable, unresolved, controversy and opposition, as in the case of Cork.

A second phase in this process of Local Government rationalisation, addresses the dilemma of governance adjustments for some larger and expanding settlements. It is noted that the foresighted provisions of *Putting People First* proposes flexible arrangements for cases of straddling settlements. However, such aspiration is likely to require updated, matching legislation that has not yet found its way onto the State's statute books.

Current boundary revisions are being undertaken under outdated 1991 Local Government legislation for Waterford City, Drogheda, Carlow and Athlone towns, in descending order of population size. The objective is to contain such settlements within a single county for administrative purposes and to so do by redrawing county boundaries where considered expedient. Such administrative 'juggling' is intended to be implemented regardless of the evident extent of local business, resident and sporting opposition. This will involve rates-base adjustment or in the creation of further geo-physical anomalies. In Drogheda's case the centre line of the Boyne was the original Elizabethan county boundary.

3. Drogheda - the grid-based evidence for a wider-based Boundary Review:

Despite the publication in 2013 of the Government's visionary *Putting People First*, Action Programme for Local Government, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DoHCLG) is in the process of undertaking yet another review of Drogheda's former Borough boundary under Section 28 of the now dated Local Government Act 1991 Act, rather than implementing the principles contained in the *Putting People First* initiative, in pursuance of the administrative objective to retain larger single settlements within a single county council area - even if this will entail other county boundary 'transfers' such as is proposed from Roscommon to Westmeath and from Meath to Louth.

It is necessary to distinguish the important and unique case of adjoining and merging high-density agglomeration for the immediate proximity of Drogheda and LBM, in contrast to low-density and/or geographically separated low-density ribbon development, elsewhere in Ireland.

Drogheda-LBM provides a unique situation (except for Dublin) in Ireland, where two adjoining plus-10,000 settlements are physically merging. The population growth evidence points to Drogheda continuing its demographic growth of up to three times that of the State population growth rate since 1996. Since then it became and continues to be Ireland's largest town. This ongoing agglomeration momentum is supported by the recent provision and commissioning of a 100,000 population capacity waste-water tertiary treatment plant at Marsh Road, Drogheda with its linking sewer networks of investment and likewise with the completion of the District-level Shopping Centre at Southgate together with the re-commencement of further residential development that are consolidating the merger of Drogheda with LBM.

In the current local government rationalisation programme, demographic scale is one of two principal issue in question that distinguishes this Boundary Review that marks Drogheda's difference with all previous such revisions. This will result in additional people who reside south of the Boyne being 'placed' in County Louth; affecting about 14,000 subject to the 2016 census results. This will also involve a transfer to Louth of several additional square kilometres of what is now part of County Meath. In Drogheda's case, previous county boundary 'adjustments' on a smaller scale have already resulted in the cumulative 'transfer' of a similar sized area south of the Boyne, from County Meath to County Louth.

The second issue is that of identifying the emergence of a new city on the demographic scale of Waterford City. Unlike Waterford, Carlow and Athlone, what differentiates Drogheda is the zero 'Distance' separation *cum* urban proximity of another large i.e. plus-10,000 town that presents the most significant factor for the future administration of Ireland's emerging city. All three other settlements are 'stand-alone' and unlike Drogheda, they do not adjoin another settlement of 10,000-plus. Of itself LBM is Ireland's thirty-fifth largest town and in 2011 it was on a par with Ashbourne as one of Meath's largest towns. The boundary review documentation shows Drogheda's proposed indicative and blue-hatched boundary line to the south of the current Borough area of Drogheda which will result in the town's new boundary extending to the western edge of LBM. To accommodate

Drogheda's expansion it also will be necessary to adjust its existing northern boundary line within County Louth which will affect a further 2,000-plus of the town's population.

Should further county administrative rationalisations occur under the *Putting People First* initiative, this could result in a Louth-Meath unification, with Drogheda-LBM becoming Ireland's fifth largest city and that sub-region's logical administrative centre with a 2016 or 2021 population greater than that of Waterford City. With the emergence of Drogheda+LBM as a city, the boundary transferral of further Meath territory into Louth should become an administrative irrelevancy. Drogheda + LBM's confirmation as Ireland's next city would complement the North's earlier initiative to grant city status to both Lisburn and Newry, within the Dublin-Belfast Corridor.

4. Drogheda-LBM's Population Urban Field Grid Matrix

The Urban Field of the Drogheda-LBM Population Density Grid on a One Sq. Km. basis is applicable to the OSI Discovery Series Map 43 (Fourth Edition, 1:50,000 scale) for the 2011 census population is set out in a population grid format, kindly provided by the CSO to this author in December 2015. The complete matrix for the twin settlement of Drogheda and LBM confirms a grid formation in a north-south depth of ten kilometre rows. The respective core populations are set out in an 'all-border' format, comprising fourteen medium-density central grids totalling 11,297 in population for LBM, located east of and next to the twenty grids totalling 37,669 for Drogheda. In all, these adjoining 34 sq. km. grids comprise a core agglomeration population of 48,996 with an average density of 1,440 people per sq. km., set out as follows:

Drogheda-LBM 2011 census Population Spread – OSI Map Grid References:

Grid cells	6/7	7/8	8/9	9/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	Totals
79/80	131	54	86	9	28	107	58	97	40	37	-	647
78/79	26	6	27	59	58	84	52	83	5	-	-	400
77/78	20	17	61	16	449	153	79	65	99	-	-	959
76/77	74	219	2,643	3,308	2,423	10	5	80	489	306	-	9,557
75/76	1,212	1,534	3,226	3,553	823	5	46	112	275	1,059	-	11,845
74/75	1,028	3,631	3,183	2,727	2,411	2,470	673	752	748	691	-	18,314
73/74	73	553	494	705	435	861	56	13	1,224	2,162	185	6,761
72/73	42	20	80	62	45	13	106	11	90	705	392	1,566
71/72	5	25	87	-	85	5	15	20	35	443	1,378	2,098
70/71	51	25	5	61	76	43	52	253	223	21	8	818
Total	2,662	6,084	9,892	10,500	6,833	3,751	1,142	1,486	3,228	5,424	1,963	52,505

Footnote:

So as to maintain local anonymity, the CSO records a count of '5' where grids have recorded census populations of between 1 and 5. Zero-populated grids are as shown. So as to make the interpretation of the grid more manageable, it limits the matrix size to eleven kilometres in width and ten kilometres in depth. It is however recognised that this surface area is therefore somewhat smaller than that of the Drogheda and District area (population 60,646 in 2011) and somewhat smaller again than the Louth and Meath Rural Areas plus Drogheda Borough (CSO population 78,594 in 2011 and 83,042 in the Preliminary Census data of 2016). It is of a size that captures the adjoining Drogheda and LBM towns and their contiguous environs.

Based on the 2011 census demographic outcome there is today, little physical or demographic separation between the settlements of Drogheda and LBM. This is confirmed in the Ordnance Survey of Ireland Map 'spine', of an unbroken high-density 'band' of population in adjoining grids. This central 'spine' extends east-west for ten square kilometres, identified in an axis along the grid 74/75 (including from references 6/7 to 15/16), as shown in the **one-kilometre cells** of this Discovery Series, map No. 43.

This is used as the grid-base for the CSO's grid matrix of populations based on the 2011 census. The west-to-east populations along this 'spine' grid line 74/75, comprises an aggregate population of 18,314, identified in their respective one sq. km. populations which is set out in the following Greater Drogheda's Urban Field Grid Matrix, showing this consolidated 'spine' cells extract, thus:-

	<u>6/7</u>	<u>7/8</u>	<u>8/9</u>	<u>9/10</u>	<u>10/11</u>	<u>11/12</u>	<u>12/13</u>	<u>13/14</u>	<u>14/15</u>	<u>15/16</u>	<u>Total</u>
74/75	1,028	3,631	3,183	2,727	2,411	2,470	673	752	748	691	18,314

Source: Part of the CSO population grid one-kilometre square matrix dimension, as requested and kindly provided to Brian Hughes, December 2015.

The six left-hand side Drogheda grids, east to include grid 11/12, are immediately followed by the four right-hand LBM ones from 12/13 eastwards. This 'agglomeration spine' for Drogheda-LBM conclusively presents an interfacing and uninterrupted population density for these adjoined settlements. Furthermore, these 'spine' data represent just one row of a ten-row deep matrix. Their spatial argument, confirming this twin-settlement merger for Drogheda-LBM, is based on this east-west spine of the 110 adjacent population grids as laid out in the full matrix grid. These identified ten adjoining 'spine' square kilometre cells have an average population density of 1,831.4 which is higher than the density of any of the four provincial cities in Ireland in that census.

A significant distinguishing feature between 'ribbon development' morphology and a dense, continuous 'urban field' is the extent and depth of development. This author avers the selection of one-kilometre-square grids which is a spatially significant one; a measure in linear terms which is ten-times that of the 100 metre UN distance. However, in evaluating the process of urbanisation for evolving large settlements and in allowing for pockets of undeveloped land or of large underdeveloped sites, it is also desirable to balance 'space' area with density, discussed as follows, in using the example of the linking of Dundalk with its adjoining seaside suburb of Blackrock, Co. Louth

5. Dundalk and Blackrock - a Grid Comparison with Drogheda-LBM:

For Ireland second largest town - Louth's County Town, Dundalk and its seaside suburb of Blackrock is centred to its south at some three to four kilometres remove. All together they comprise a 2011 census settlement population of 37,816, where the Blackrock area comprises 6,500 of its total population. Blackrock is

adjudged to conform to the U.N. distance rule and thus to be included as the southern part of a single Dundalk settlement.

However, the one-kilometre square grid populations, when compared with the above Drogheda-LBM grid, reveals that its linking cells are less dense than those comparable ones for Drogheda-LBM, the latter settlement's identified linking cell density being diluted to 328, 482, 117 and 853 persons per square kilometre because of the presence of an 18-Hole golf course at Haggardstown. They are set out in a similar OSI Grid-map Discovery Series No. 36 (2007) format including the specified grid-cell references, as follows:

Dundalk-Blackrock 2011 Census
Population Grid - OSI Map
References:

Cells	<u>02/03</u>	<u>03/04</u>	<u>04/05</u>	<u>05/06</u>	<u>06/07</u>	<u>07/08</u>	<u>08/09</u>	<u>Totals</u>
09/10	158	676	380	276	-	50	88	1,628
08/09	236	2,650	1,799	120	362	-	54	5,221
07/08	35	2,232	2,314	1,807	1,854	753	272	9,267
06/07	90	1,024	1,304	4,360	2,872	50	19	9,719
05/06	97	85	637	2,802	2,105	-	-	5,726
04/05	52	69	29	378	328	117	-	973
03/04	66	39	67	255	482	853	-	1,762
02/03	109	83	159	471	2,028	599	-	3,449
01/02	6	27	21	31	331	-	-	416
Total	849	6,885	6,710	10,500	10,362	2,422	433	38,161

Source: CSO Population

Note: The boxed grids delineate the Dundalk-Blackrock 'spine', which runs in a north north-west south south-east axis.

The distorted result of applying the aforementioned 100 metre U.N. distance criterion on its own, instead of utilising density-proximity measurements is that it masks Ireland's few emerging cases of urban agglomeration. Such density research is vital to the task of settlement selection in the forthcoming National

Spatial Framework. From a side-by-side comparing of the two sets of grid population data, the Drogheda-LBM scale and size of urban agglomeration is far superior to that of Dundalk-Blackrock. Hence, the following comparisons are instructive:

- One Km. Grid Size: Drogheda-LBM = 110 sq. km; Dundalk-Blackrock = 63 sq.km.
- Total Grid Populations: Drogheda-LBM = 52,965; Dundalk-Blackrock = 38,161.
- Linking 2-grid Populations: Drogheda-LBM = 1,425; Dundalk-Blackrock = 810
- 2011 Populations: Drogheda = 38,578; Dundalk (excluding Blackrock) = 31,316
- 2011 LBM and Blackrock Populations: LBM = 10,889; Blackrock = 6,500 (*vide* Grid).
- Densest LBM cell = 2,162; densest Blackrock cell = 2,028 population.
- Void cells: Drogheda-LBM = 9 cells; Dundalk-Blackrock = 9 cells.

From a governance standpoint given these brief empiric comparisons and their resultant evidence bases, the NSS description of Drogheda's status and presumed 'function', which is officially described as a 'support' town to the Dundalk Gateway, reflects a "tail wagging dog" assessment, focused on a misguided focus of retention of the current 'county-town' *status quo* arrangement.

It also reflects a rigid local governance mind-set of one that refuses to address the density and scale-size evidence of Drogheda's agglomeration with LBM. This is buttressed in selectively using the U.N. Distance Rule for settlement separation whilst choosing to ignore the fact that Dundalk inclusive of Blackrock's 2011 population is less than that of stand-alone Drogheda, without LBM.

6. Grid Spine Test: comparing Drogheda with Dundalk's contiguity:

In analysing the population densities of the central spine cells that attach the respective adjoining settlements, it is possible to clarify the respective levels of agglomeration of Drogheda+LBM compared with Dundalk including Blackrock Co Louth, in 2011.

By definition, the Dundalk-Blackrock infill typifies a ribbon infill morphology which is essentially fixed because of the aforementioned presence and hollowing-out effect of its 18-hole golf course. Along the west side of the golf course, another 'ribbon' development links Dundalk southward to Blackrock represented by the cell grids of 378 and 255 populations. In contrast, Drogheda's higher density link-cells already exhibit much superior densities, despite still having further infill-land development potential. First are shown the data of Dundalk's spine cells:

Dundalk's spine cells:-

	<u>03/04</u>	<u>03/04</u>	<u>04/05</u>	<u>05/06</u>	<u>05/06</u>	<u>05/06</u>	<u>06/07</u>	<u>06/07</u>	<u>06/07</u>	
	<u>@09/1</u>	<u>@08/0</u>	<u>@07/0</u>	<u>@06/07</u>	<u>@05/0</u>	<u>@04/0</u>	<u>@03/0</u>	<u>@02/0</u>	<u>@01/0</u>	<u>Total</u>
	0	2	8		6	5	4	3	2	
676	2,650	2,314		2,802		378	482	2,028	331	16,021

Source: OSI Grid-map Discovery Series No. 36 (2007): west-east first, followed by their north-south coordinates for these nine one-kilometre square populations.

For convenience of easy comparison, the corresponding Drogheda spine cells are shown alongside, as follows:

Greater Drogheda's consolidated 'spine' cells extract, thus:-

	<u>6/7</u>	<u>7/8</u>	<u>8/9</u>	<u>9/10</u>	<u>10/1</u>	<u>11/1</u>	<u>12/1</u>	<u>13/1</u>	<u>14/1</u>	<u>15/1</u>	<u>Total</u>
					<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	
@74/	1,02	3,63	3,18		2,41	2,47					18,31
75	8	1	3	2,727	1	0	673	752	748	691	4

Source: Part of the CSO population grid one-kilometre square matrix dimension, as kindly provided to Brian Hughes, December 2015.

Thus Drogheda's interface with LBM is at the point shown as where cell (population) 2,470 meets 673; the corresponding Dundalk interface with Blackrock is at the point where population cell 2,802 meets 378. The next respective cells show respective populations of 482 for Dundalk's Blackrock and 752 for Drogheda's LBM.

Accordingly, the Drogheda link-cells are noted as being significantly denser in populations than those of Dundalk's. The lower densities for Dundalk's link cells are explained primarily by the positioning and location of the aforementioned golf course. Yet, the contrasting case of Drogheda's potential is noted as one where these specific cells contain residentially zoned lands which remain to be developed and thus become denser.

Contrasting these two sets of adjoining settlements, it is noted that the NSS 2002 strategy had obviously ignored Drogheda's agglomeration with LBM as being one that then suggests linear dis-contiguity and would not have had the parallel evidence of density and proximity as adduced above. In contrast, the NSS had sought to rely solely on the formulation of far-fetched 'Linked Gateway' and 'Linked Hub' concept, where average distances are some 19 miles (30 km.) separating individual settlement populations in the 20,000 to 100,000 range (for Letterkerenny with Derry), but typically for settlements of about 14,000 to 20,000 (e.g. Athlone, Tullamore and Mullingar) with distances of up to 59 km.

However, should its specific cell, of 1,224 population of 2011, grow to equal or exceed 1,500 in a future (e.g. in the 2016 census), then the EU 50,000 minimum population criterion would appear to be satisfied, even omitting the low-density rows of cells from the top and bottom of the matrix.

Application of the HEU rule would therefore require the 18.40% shortfall to be eliminated in that 1,224-populated cell's 2011 population. In this regard, it is noted that this cell is fully positioned within the St Mary's electoral district, which achieved an overall 11.12% growth (2011-2016) as per the 2016 Preliminary Census results. Depending on that actual, specific cell population performance, there is a possibility that its growth performance may have already reduced or eliminated the 2011 shortfall, to be clarified once the full results for the 2016 census are available. It is understood that Waterford's comparable cell structure for its 2011 census grid outcome likewise presents some similar dis-continuous anomalies. However, there appears to be provision for the individual EU State to be able to apply for a derogation where a 'city' status already exists. Some six States have already availed of this Appeals' provision.

Significantly, the application of evidence-based population density grid data, at the standardised one square kilometre level as published in 2015, now provides an internationally-recognised way of avoiding the urban classification problem. It represents an accepted internationally recognised methodology for obtaining such insights that utilise such CSO data, that has been available only as recent as 2013. It should therefore be extensively utilised in the process of growth settlement selection in future national and regional-level spatial strategy plan formulation for Ireland.

11. Research Conclusions:

Pending the 2016 final census outcome, the evidence adduced in this research, with its application of the Harmonised EU grid test informs the emergence of Ireland's next stand-alone city, Drogheda+LBM; one that is on a scale-size with Waterford City. It is noted that the Preliminary 2016 population of 83,042 for the Greater Drogheda Area (GDrA) in 2016 represents a 78.77% growth since 1996. Together Drogheda+LBM have a 30%+ larger and denser agglomerating population than that of Dundalk+Blackrock, Co Louth. Over 2011-2016 Waterford City's population increased by 1,637 to 48,369 or 3.50%, just below the national growth average: the comparative growth for Drogheda+LBM is above twice that level, thereby reducing or even eliminating the former size difference.

Significant built environment/ infrastructure projects and the demographic and growth-momentum data as presented herein, articulates the progress made by Drogheda-LBM to 2011 - thrice the rate of the State's population growth. The intervening five years to 2016 has seen the 'retirement' of the defective National Spatial Strategy including its conspicuous failure to recognise this most significant example of Irish urban agglomeration outside of Dublin. The 2002 NSS classification of Drogheda, where it was neither considered to merit a 'Gateway' nor a 'Hub' designation, but rather assigned a demeaning role as a 'support town' to Dundalk, was deeply flawed on urban economic and demographic grounds. The comparative

research evidence presented in this Paper confirms that such spatial classification is perverse and is perhaps explained as being politically driven.

The forthcoming National Planning Framework is heralded as one that will use evidenced-based data in its construction and accordingly, is unlikely to ignore the emerging demographic evidence of urban agglomeration, for matrix field densification purposes, in settlement size classification and in placing Drogheda-LBM in the vanguard of Ireland's major growth centres. The east-west split (Table 4 above) of the State's population growth 2011-2016 was 132,850 versus 36,874 or 4.68% versus 2.37% growth (in the North-South line down to Youghal) and in dividing the Border Region into its three eastern and three western counties).

The background theory and application of grid-based measurement has been pioneered in Ireland by CSO's Dermot Corcoran, in his DIT Masters Dissertation (2011) *Disseminating Irish Census data using grids: An example of combining spatial and statistical information*. One is grateful to Dermot for providing the Drogheda and Dundalk 2011 grid data in excel format consistent with the respective specified OSI maps, as referenced.

The previous use and application of Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) has the drawback of their wide surface-area variations for comparing the populations of small areas such as Electoral Districts.

Pending Brussels' approval of Ireland's three NUTS 2 Super Regions, as provided for in the *Putting People First* Action Programme, this research will assist the County Louth's integration into the East Region (Map at Page 191, *ibid*). The agglomeration of Drogheda-LBM opens the path for this Government to undertake the process for the grant of city status. It will consolidate the growth of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, commensurate with Lisburn and Lurgan's recent acquisition of city status north of the Border. This research paper presentation to the Regional Studies Association has tracked the demographic progress of Drogheda and Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington as the engine within the fast-growing Greater Drogheda Area.

The Centenary of 1916 should be being marked with appropriate examples of Ireland's progress and achievements. The 2016 census results have begun to emerge. The agglomeration of Drogheda-LBM now provides a significant centenary opportunity for this Government to confirm Drogheda as Ireland's next city!

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APPENDIX 1

The following 2016 Preliminary Electoral District Populations are compared herein together with the 2011 Census out-turn for the Greater Drogheda Area, thus:

Louth Rural Area:

Electoral District	2011 Population	Preliminary 2016	Population Growth	Percentage Growth
Clogher	3,031	3,237	206	6.8
Dysart	918	925	7	0.8
Monasterboice	1,342	1,365	23	1.7
Mellory	1,723	1,754	31	1.8
St. Peter's (pt)	6,990	7,605	615	8.8
Termonfeckin	<u>3,294</u>	<u>3,537</u>	<u>243</u>	<u>7.4</u>
Total	17,298	18,423	1,125	6.5

Meath Rural Area:

Electoral District	2011 Population	Preliminary 2016	Population Growth	Percentage Growth
Ardcath	1,911	1,945	34	1.8
Duleek	5,177	5,554	377	7.3
Julianstown	9,606	10,139	533	5.5
Mellifont	561	542	-19	-3.4
St. Mary's (part)	10,769	11,967	1,198	11.1
Stamullen	<u>4,696</u>	<u>5,001</u>	<u>305</u>	<u>6.5</u>
Total	32,720	35,148	2,428	7.4

Drogheda Borough Area:

Electoral District	2011 Population	Preliminary 2016	Population Growth	Percentage Growth
Fair Gate	9,806	10,317	511	5.2
St. Laurence's Gate	4,004	4,075	71	1.8
West Gate	6,042	6,284	242	4.0
St. Peter's (part)	2,161	2,099	-62	-2.9
St. Mary's (part)	<u>6,563</u>	<u>6,696</u>	<u>133</u>	<u>2.0</u>
Total	28,576	29,471	895	3.1

Greater Drogheda Area:	78,594	83,042	4,448
	5.7		

Note 1: Caution is required in above comparisons because the 2016 Census data are 'preliminary', pending publication of definitive census figures, in mid-2017. Preliminary State growth 2011-2016 was 3.7%.

Note 2: Drogheda Borough's population was recorded as 30,393 in the 2011 census, some 1,817 above the ascribed figure listed in the 2016 Preliminary census. Thus the Louth Rural area is shown above as 17,298 compared with 15,481 in the 2011 Census, in the CSO Area Volume, Table 6.

It is expected that the 2016 census, usually at Table 7 of the Area Volume when published, should confirm the combined settlement population of Drogheda+LBM to have exceeded 50,000. This brings into play the Harmonised European Union's four-stage density and agglomeration criteria as per nine-cell cluster measure for Graz, Austria, as set out in P. 12 of this Paper. As in previous inter-censal periods, for the Meath Rural Area this again is shown as the fastest growing part of the Greater Drogheda Area, and particularly so for the double-digit percentage growth of that part of the St. Mary's Electoral District south-east of Drogheda Borough. The confirmed growth of the specific cell - population, having 1,224 in 2011, vide P. 13 *super* - would then become the decisive factor in confirming the Drogheda+LBM urban agglomeration. Furthermore, and having regard to infrastructural provision, the housing crisis combined with implementation of the sequential spatial planning model for timely new, mixed residential development for this already-serviced part of Drogheda will future-proof the realisation of such agglomeration.

APPENDIX 2

The eight Key Concepts of Balanced Regional Development in the 2002-2020 NSS

- The key concepts (of the NSS) are potential, critical mass, gateways, hubs, complementary roles and linkages.
- Potential is the capacity that an area possesses, or could in future possess, for development, arising from its endowment of natural resources, population, labour, its economic and social capital, infrastructure and its location relative to markets.
- Critical mass relates to size and concentration of population that enables a range of services and facilities to be supported. This in turn can attract and support higher levels of economic activity and improved quality of life.
- Gateways have a strategic location, nationally and relative to their surrounding areas, and provide national scale social, economic infrastructure and support services. Further development of the five existing gateways at Dublin, Cork, Limerick/ Shannon, Galway and Waterford is a key component of the NSS.
- In addition, a small number of other large towns, which have the potential capacity to become gateways and lead development in their regions, will play a key role in achieving a more balanced role in regional development.
- Hubs: A number of towns will act as hubs, supporting the national and international role of the gateways and in turn energising smaller towns and rural areas within their sphere of influence.
- Complementary roles for other towns, villages and rural areas; various medium-sized towns in each region will act as 'local capitals' providing a range of services and opportunities for employment. Within the spatial framework provided by the NSS, rural potential will draw upon local economic strengths, supported by a stronger structure of smaller towns and villages as a focus for economic and social activity and residential development.
- Linkages in terms of good transport, communications and energy networks are vitally important to enable places and areas to play to their strengths.

Source: The National Spatial Strategy (2002-2020: 12)

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A Critique on the Boundary Review Report for Drogheda and of its Relevance to the Growth Centre Selection for the Forthcoming National Planning Framework:

Introduction: There is evidence to show that the four contemporaneous Reports (for Drogheda, Waterford, Carlow and Athlone) were completed with some haste and that they were over-reliant on following a standardised template of direction: to examine the four settlements without considering the possibility of nearby settlement merger. Accordingly this created a pitfall for the reviewers in the case of Drogheda's review because of its unique circumstances of its urban agglomeration with another +10,000-populated large town Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington. That review also ignored and up-to-date measures including the 2016 census evidence or the 2015 EU-OECD Harmonised Measure to capture agglomeration. The position of Drogheda is unique, as there is no evidence of a similar occurrence of agglomeration in any of the other three settlements reviewed.

Specifically, the reviewers ignored or more likely, were unaware of this standard OECD-EU Harmonised (2015) measure for assessing the formation of a city - perhaps this also reflects an inadequate Terms of Reference, but then Waterford city itself is under close examination and hence the questioning of its city size minimum of 50,000 by the EU for this precise reason! The suspicion of 'template' adherence is very evident in the content of the second-last paragraph at P. 44 with the Review Committee's focus just on the delineated Area of Interest and in their 'finding' of LBM as constituting an "adjacent rural area". The following specific observations are relevant:

Page 17, Last Paragraph: States "With regard to political representation, the Council held that a change in the boundary resulting in the loss of approximately 6,000 residents may have a knock-on effect on the composition of Laytown/Bettystown Municipal District, resulting in a decrease in the number of Council seats." This is a tacit recognition of the existence of a large block of population and Municipal District in LBM, albeit 'Mornington' is not included in the Laytown/Bettystown descriptive for this large town, recognised by the CSO as a 'town' since the census of the 1980s.

Page 18, First Paragraph: States "Meath County Council believed that proponents of the Drogheda City Status Campaign have taken the boundary review as an opportunity to promote their campaign. The Council was of the view that city status is separate from the question of the boundary review, but argued nonetheless that the creation of an additional city in the country is not justified. Any such city would lack the scale to compete internationally with other cities and is not supported by the Minister." - Not so! At the NUIM Launch of the National Planning Framework on February 2nd 2017, in responding to Dr Brian Hughes pointing to the evidence basis that supports The Drogheda City Status Committee's position, Minister Simon Coveney confirmed publically that he and his Department will examine this evidence and will take it on board in the formulation of the NPF and in any formal application for city status, see 'Conclusions', hereunder.

The issue of "lack of Scale" for Drogheda-LBM is refuted in current demographics which confirm a similar scale to Waterford City and that "the creation of an additional city in the country is not justified." comment is not supported by this evidence. In the 2016 census there are over 41,500 people living on the north bank of the Boyne and a similar population resident on the south bank, i.e. comprising the Louth and Meath Rural Areas and the former Drogheda Borough. Specifically, this population has grown from 46,451 in 1996 to 83,042 in 2016, a twenty year growth of 78.77% compared with Ireland's (State) population growth of 31.22% over the same twenty years.

Unlike Waterford, Drogheda-LBM is located just twenty minutes from a 29 million p.a. passenger movement Airport and twenty-five minutes from Dublin Port Tunnel, is growing at three times the rate of Waterford and is the largest settlement within the Dublin-Belfast Corridor, with its critical economic and geo-political role and strategic location. Following the precedent when Galway's population exceeded that of Waterford in the 1980's when it became a city, today and applying same precedent is equally valid for Drogheda-LBM's case for city status.

Page 38, Last Paragraph: "5.5 Service Delivery (across the full range of local authority functions envisaged in the Action Programme for Effective Local Government, Putting People First and the Local Government Reform Act 2014). Meath County Council has focused significant investment in the Area of Interest, with €20.665m invested in the period 2001 to 2015. [see footnote 25]. Given the growth potential with 124.88 hectares of employment-zoned land,²⁶ it can be anticipated that the area will remain a focus for the Council, with ongoing

investment in services into the future. 26 Table 4.1 Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019.”

This Review Committee's contradiction and failure to acknowledge the urban agglomeration between Drogheda and LBM is significant. This Page 38 section is at variance with the Page 44 section as this €20.665m 'significant investment' since 2001 to 2015 to facilitate future development. Another reason is their recognition of the “the growth potential with 124.88 hectares of employment-zoned land” and also ... Why build a Waste Water Plant south-river for a 100,000-people capacity and permit the construction of the nearby District-Level Shopping Centre at Southgate and grant planning permissions for thousands of further houses, if it was intended to remain a 'rural area' as was mistakenly described in the Boundary Committee's Report?

Page 44. Second-last Paragraph: “The whole Laytown-Bettystown ED was not included in the Area of Interest (see section 4.2), and the Committee has identified no reason why this area should be included in County Louth, should the boundary be extended. The Report continues “...any extension into the adjoining rural area should ensure that any south-eastern expansion of Drogheda does not encroach on LaytownBettystown-Mornington and the distinct character of these settlements is retained.” **Incorrect!**

LBM is not an “adjacent rural area” or a series of “distinct settlements” as mistakenly describes what is Meath's third largest town and Ireland's 35th in the 'Large Town i.e. +10,000 category'. In the 2011 census LBM had a bigger population than the County Towns of Cavan and Wicklow and it is also larger than the 'large towns' of Enniscorthy and Tramore. Furthermore as the grid analysis herein below confirms, LBM is agglomerating with Drogheda and is therefore unique and different from the other Boundary Reviews of Waterford, Carlow or Athlone, none of which have a large agglomerating nearby town similar to LBM unlike the case for Drogheda.

Conclusion: Given the 2016 demographic background, the biggest error of the Boundary Report is that it was hopelessly under ambitious in its delineation of a confined 'Area of Interest' in excluding LBM. Ironically, the whole Boundary extension exercise appears to have been unnecessary, if by its own findings and admission (P. 33) the management and administration of an overflowing urban settlement can be adequately addressed under the provisions of Sections 85 and 86 of the *Putting People First* new era for Local Government!

Accordingly, all of Greater Drogheda, i.e. the Borough Council area together with both the Louth and Meath Rural Areas should form the Area of Interest to be managed and administered by a greatly-strengthened Greater Drogheda Area Council, as an interim “agency arrangement” and a precursor to Drogheda-LBM City becoming the capital of the new Louth-Meath Sub-Region in the

rationalising and transferring to this enlarged Authority the County Councils of both Louth and Meath from Dundalk and Navan, respectively, to the new city. Substantial economies of scale could then be achieved by a population which would be equivalent to the Administrative County of Fingal.

With the distractions of the Boundary Review Report now in the hands of the Minister, this provides him and his Department to take a comprehensive and wider view of boundary, city status and the rationalisation of counties Louth and Meath into a single administrative sub-regional entity, based and located in Drogheda-LBM as 'Whitaker' city. Such measure would strengthen the geo-political and economic environment for the largest settlement in the Dublin-Belfast Corridor in this post-Brexit and post-Nationalist majority Northern Ireland Assembly era.

Accordingly, the Drogheda City Status Group intends to petition in applying to the Minister to consider the 2016 Census as the evidence-base as Ireland's next city. The grid demographic evidence, when it is to hand on the next few weeks, when applying this evidence to the EU-OECD Harmonised Measure for assessment of Drogheda-LBM as Ireland's fifth city, having equalled or exceeded Waterford's population as at April 2016. The precedence is Galway which became Ireland's last city in the 1980s after its population had exceeded that of Waterford City. The need for another provincial city in the Rest of Leinster 'province' is likewise justified on population proportionality, given that Munster has three of the provincial cities in addition to Connacht's Galway City, *vide* Table 1. Furthermore, the compelling case for strengthening the Dublin-Belfast Corridor in the all-Ireland post Brexit context, is likewise endorsed as the first point, P. 37 of the NPF's 'Issues and Choices' document.

Table 1: Provincial Performance - Population Numbers

5 Provinces:	Census 2011 Pop.	Preliminary 2016 Pop.	2011-2016 pop. Growth and % contribution	5-year % growth	% surface area of State
Dublin	1,273,069	1,345,402	72,333 = 42.62%	5.68%	1.35
Rest of Leinster	1,231,745	1,285,318	53,573 = 31.56%	4.35%	27.26
Munster	1,246,088	1,280,394	34,306 = 20.21%	2.75%	35.12
Connacht	542,547	550,742	8,195 = 4.83%	1.51%	24.74
Ulster (part)	<u>294,803</u>	<u>296,120</u>	<u>1,317 = 0.78%</u>	<u>0.45%</u>	<u>11.53</u>
		4,757,97	169,724 =		
Ireland	4,588,252	6	100.00%	3.70%	100.00

In regard to towns and Municipal Districts, paragraph 6.4.2(c) states:

“However, in all cases the district should incorporate the relevant hinterland of each town, subject to the constraints imposed by county boundaries close to towns e.g. New Ross located adjacent to the Kilkenny/Wexford boundary, Carrick-on-Suir adjacent to the boundary between Tipperary and Waterford, or Athlone on the Roscommon/Westmeath border. In cases such as these, suitable agency arrangements or service level agreements should be implemented to ensure that one authority has responsibility for all functions (including development plans) and services throughout the entire area of the town, notwithstanding county boundaries.”

An interesting demographic parallel and growth contrast to Drogheda itself is the town and environs of Sligo. Over the fifty-years since the census of 1966 Sligo's population has increased from 13,452 to 19,000 (awaiting 2016 figure) and Drogheda from 17,908 to 41,000 today i.e. respective growth rates of 41.24% and 128.95%. Inexplicably, Sligo was designated as a 'Gateway' in the discredited NSS while Drogheda occupied a third tier town 'status' alongside Carrick on Shannon! Since 2002 Sligo's population has declined. Hopefully the replacement NPF will pay some attention to picking winners!