

Submission NPR March 2017

Minister,

This is probably the most important strategy the Government will deliver during its term in office.

The NSS was also delivered with similar aplomb however it didn't deliver due to the economic crash, state agencies not adhering to the policy and some counties ignoring their own developments plans.

Dublin is acknowledged as the Economic engine of the country and all the stats support this however, if it was located in the centre of the country with 360 degree access we wouldn't have the same issues as we are experiencing currently.

I believe the issue is how we complement our greatest asset our capital City with cities and regions?

My submission is for the Midlands and how it can complement Dublin?

By Offering:

- A location bang in the center of the country with 360 deg connectivity and equal distance from east to west and north to south.
- A successful sustainable place supporting economic growth with 3 towns that have established town centres and infrastructure
- A connected place- supported by existing rail, roads, & digital connectivity
- Quality of life, supported by natural resources e.g. lakes,, rivers, canals, mountains, walkways, cycle ways, B na Mona Parklands, Castles, access to Schools, IT's Universities, Healthcare inc 2 Regional Hospitals


I believe to achieve the above the Midlands can offer a readymade solution via the towns of Athlone, Tullamore and Mullingar. The combined strengths of the 3 towns can offer the necessary criteria to complement Dublin and be part of its expansion solutions. No one Town in the Midlands can offer this solution, due to their existing population and therefore would take approx. 30 years to grow into a city with 80k population at 10% growth pa. This just isn't sustainable and would suck all potential growth out of the other surrounding towns during this period. Combining the ATM towns this growth would only take 4 years at 10% growth and the entire Midlands would benefit!. This template would follow similar successful templates of polycentric (combined towns) in Eurpoe which have been successful.

The Midlands Gateway chamber was established as the result of the NSS in 2002 the 3 towns of Athlone, Tullamore, Mullingar came together, whilst it was difficult for the initial 3 or so years the towns eventually replaced their town Jersey's for a Midlands one!

It would be a travesty to discontinue with this formula now, after so much collaboration and hard work across, chambers of commerce, State agencies including Offaly and Westmeath Co Co

I therefore propose the combined strengths of Athlone, Tullamore, Mullingar as the entity under the NPF. to complement the growth of Dublin and as a new development zone in the middle of our Island.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Doherty', written in a cursive style.

Dominic Doherty

Past President Midlands Gateway Chamber

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