

National Planning Framework

From: Damien Kierans [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 October 2017 13:32
To: National Planning Framework
Subject: National Planning Framework 2040 - Drogheda City - City of the Boyne Valley
Attachments: National Planning Framework - Drogheda City - City of the Boyne Valley.pdf

Hi,

Please find attached my letter sharing my views for the National Planning Framework 2040 to include Drogheda as part of this proposal.

Thank You.

Regards,

[REDACTED]
www.redm1snevents.ie





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

Damien Kierans
Red Fish Events



Hi,

Hope you are well.

My name is Damien Kierans, I am writing on behalf of myself and my events company Red Fish Events to outline Droghedas need to be included as part of the National Planning Framework 2040.

Red Fish is an events company registered in Clogherhead Co. Louth, a seaside suburb of Drogheda. It's our mission at Red Fish Events to promote Clogherhead and surrounding areas by using all of the Boyne Valley Regions food, people, history and folklore to promote tourism in our region.

Red Fish is a family run company set up by myself and my cousin David Bradley. The reason we set up Red Fish Events was out of frustration at the lack of infrastructure, development and tourism in our region. Just to note both David and I also work full time in Dublin for separate companies outside of Red Fish.

Our region is steeped with history and should be acknowledged as such. Drogheda has the potential to be one of the top tourist destinations not only in the North East, but, in the entirety of the country. It amazes me at how underdeveloped the town is and the lack of interest at council and government level to do anything about it. It's hard not to have the mind-set that if Drogheda's attractions, monuments, river, churches and medieval structures where in any other part of the country they would be used to their fullest potential. One example of this is St. Peters Roman Catholic Church which holds the head of St. Oliver Plunkett. If this was in Dublin, Cork or Galway it would be a huge tourist attraction and the city would be famed for this globally. There are people from Ireland that don't even know that this exists, it beggars belief. Drogheda could be the city of the Boyne Valley Region. The River Boyne is deep enough to cater for cruise liners opening up Drogheda as a true gateway to the region.

Outside of the towns tourism potential, Droghedas population has increased drastically since I was a child growing up in the town. In over 20 years we went from a third tier population to a first tier population with an excess of 43,000 people in the town borough. If the boundary of the town was increased to include Drogheda Co. Meath the population would actually increase to roughly 50,000 people in the town alone. This doesn't include the suburbs of Louth and Meath like my own village of Clogherhead and others such as Termonfeckin, Baltray, Tullyallen, Collon in Co. Louth and Bettystown, Mornington, Laytown, Julianstown, Bellewstown, Donore in Co. Meath, and, its estimated that this actual figure is over 80,000 people that use Drogheda as a hub for employment, education, socialising, shopping etc. The population exceeds Waterford City currently and also Galway City when it was awarded City Status in the 80's. How the drafters of the planning document can sit back and refuse to look at the facts and say Drogheda doesn't deserve to be included in the National Planning Framework is either in denial for personal reasons and or not fit to be in the role they are in.

The town currently does not have the infrastructure or employment to support this level of population. Crime is increasing and the Gardaí are understaffed. I am fully aware that people outside of the town has a perception of Drogheda having a bad reputation. It has a bad reputation because of the lack of development in the town. Drogheda's fate is decided by two county councils seated in their county towns, both of which is not Drogheda. Louth and Meath Councils priority is Dundalk and Navan respectively and this is no secret to the population of East Meath and South Louth. It is essential that *Drogheda City* has its own council to rectify this serious low level of investment and opportunities given to the South Louth and the East Meath region.

Drogheda is on the Dublin/Belfast Corridor and 30 minutes' drive for Dublin international airport. We are ideally situated for FDI to setup in our town. The population pool and workforce is available to cater for these business's. Like many people I travel to Dublin on a daily basis having a 140km round trip every day. I leave my house at 5:45am and do not return home until 7pm. This does not have to be the case for many people in the North East. If some vision was put forward for Drogheda this could be solved. We are being bypassed constantly by business's locating to Dundalk which is increasing frustration and anger levels within the town greatly.

Droghedeans have recently took matters into their own hands and have finally closed St. Laurences Gate to traffic and will hopefully be opened as a tourist attraction in the not too distant future. There is momentum now to speak out and not take neglect at council and government level any longer. If Drogheda is ignored as part of this new plan there will be outrage amongst the towns inhabitants.

I am asking you to please review the draft proposal of the National Planning Framework and include Drogheda as part of the final proposal. I do not want my children to grow up in the same *held back* town as I did. Drogheda has huge potential to be a hub for the entire North East and a Mecca for tourism in the Boyne Valley Region. The facts are in front of you. Please give me faith in the people that govern this country.

Regards,

Damien Kierans


www.redfishevents.ie



I wish you guys would take Drogheda more seriously as a major town. It should be top of anyone's list of places with a big potential for renovation and development to the benefit of the whole country.

I am a poet, novelist and artist who has lived in Drogheda for 14 years now. I am an active participant in its thriving creative community of writers, artists and musicians for which it is noted in the country and admired by other towns. I find it a very attractive and historic town with a striking new vista round ever corner that should be exploited more than it is currently as a major tourist attraction in its own right as well as a tourist hub for the Boyne Valley. A Tourism Chief with power to encourage (by grants) or oblige landlords and owners to do up and let or sell the many vacant houses and shops and derelict premises. The entry route into town, for instance, is very unwelcoming with its obviously empty and derelict properties. This alone could make a major contribution to the country's housing problem.

With its excellent transport links by road and rail to Dublin and Belfast, to Dublin Airport and Port, excellent schools and hospital, it should be a prime location for business and industry and well worth receiving greater emphasis from the IDA. I am extremely surprised that it has not attracted more foreign companies already. It is the friendliest place I have ever lived and local people seem to have accepted immigrants into the community in a very positive way..

Things that Drogheda would be well capable of handling include a third level educational establishment, In view of the number of writers and artists here, maybe a College of the Performing and Written Arts – possible a British or American university would like to establish and arm here.?

Another need is a transport supremo with the necessary finance and common sense to install mini-roundabouts and traffic lights and more effective signage to ensure the traffic flow. The town is blessed with wide roads but planners have allowed excessive on-road parking that has necessitated an ineffective one-way system. I'd also like to see more acknowledgement of the long history of the town over many centuries by history trails and plaques/graphics boards with visuals and text about the docks, the religious establishments, where the old street markets were, the unusual and distinctive buildings and fine vernacular architecture. The town also misses out from lack of a good mid-sized theatre. Efforts should be made to encourage landlords to reduce commercial rents to attract businesses into the centre of the town as planners have pushed them out to outskirts.

A major urban conglomeration here could relieve a lot of the pressure on Dublin and maybe forestall the need to develop a new town in the near future. I really think these ideas should be taken seriously.

