

From: [REDACTED] on behalf of Gerry Adams
<Gerry.Adams@Oireachtas.ie>
Sent: 27 October 2017 18:46
To: National Planning Framework
Subject: Submission on the draft National Planning Framework 2040- Office of Gerry Adams TD
Attachments: Louth NPF 2040 Submission- Gerry Adams.docx

A chara,

Please find attached my Submission on the draft National Planning Framework 2040, on behalf of Gerry Adams TD for Louth and East Meath , and Sinn Féin Louth

It would be appreciated if you could revert and confirm receipt of same, to Gerry.Adams@Oireachtas.ie .

Is mise le meas

Gerry Adams TD.

(See attached file: Louth NPF 2040 Submission- Gerry Adams.docx)

Office of Gerry Adams TD
Sinn Féin President
Kildare St
Dublin 2

Leinster House Tel: +353 1 618 4442
Dundalk Constituency Office Tel: +353 42 932 8859

Website: www.sinnfein.ie
Blog: www.leargas.blogspot.com
Twitter: GerryAdamsSF

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National Planning Framework 2040 Submission – Gerry Adams TD.

Introduction ;

Having a long term vision for the growth of the island is essential. It's particularly important in border regions such as Louth , which has been marginalised from a socio economic and investment perspective for many years . Louth has also suffered as a direct result of an imposed border.

Large border towns like Dundalk will bear the brunt of the looming impact of Brexit in terms of investment, infrastructure and transport. Towns like Drogheda with a large urban population have been historically overlooked for greater regional investment in favour of Dublin centred competition.

The 2040 NPF must learn lessons from the National Spatial strategy 2002-2020 failures in terms of regional development for counties such as Louth. It must not address the needs of not just one county, nor 26 counties, but address the needs of 32 counties. An all island approach is of particular importance in recognising and developing the needs of border counties such as Louth.

This submission sets out key points particular to Louth which must be included in the 2040 NPF.

Regional Development:

Previous planning strategies attempted regional development in the past. The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 aimed to deliver more balanced social, economic and physical development between regions. Towns within regions such as Louth became gateways or hubs. This strategy was never realised. It had no statutory or legislative backing.

Regional development must be part of NPF 2040. It must be done with a collective approach, ensuring that all Louth regional branches of local authorities work together to overcome barriers.

NPF 2040 plans must be developed in conjunction with, and compliment detailed regional and local plans. This opportunity to plan must also ensure that criteria are set out ensuring that no areas are effectively left out because areas are forced to compete for resources.

Infrastructure:

Louth has a unique geographical location within the primary economic corridor of the island of Ireland (Dublin-Belfast). NPF 2040 must acknowledge this and be cognisant of Louth in its plan.

The Narrow Water bridge project which is endorsed and supported by council authorities in both Louth and Newry, Mourne& Down, must proceed.

A special joint report published in 2011 by the CSO and NISRA for both parts of the island showed that 14,800 persons regularly commute between two jurisdictions to work or study. The report showed that the majority of these people lived in border areas such as Louth. NPF 2040 must include an upgrade of the Dublin Belfast rail route, to ensure provision of an hourly service

A study of sustainable transport options such as greenway projects, cycle paths and bus lanes must form part of any future planning. Projects such as the Boyne side Trail and the Carlingford to Drogheda Greenway promote environmental, energy sustainable alternatives which must be supported in future plans.

Tourism:

Louth is a gateway to the Boyne Valley in the south of the county and sweeps through much history and heritage up to the Cooley peninsula and the Carlingford region. NPF 2040 must recognise this and ensure Louth's place in tourism initiatives like Ireland's Ancient East.

The Louth region must be supported by NPF 2040 in realising and optimising its unique tourist potential. NPF 2040 should also be cognisant of the all island tourism potential in border counties such as Louth.

Broadband;

NPF 2040 must address the inadequate roll out of broadband in black spots like those in rural parts of Louth. These rural areas already face challenges in creating and retaining jobs, broadband is essential in order to meet these challenges.

Fast and reliable broadband is a vital tool in attracting jobs to locations outside of Dublin. NPF 2040 must recognise the need for substantial investment needed to ensure businesses needs are met. Broadband is no longer a benefit of a town and its environs, it is now a pre requisite for employers and investors.

Housing:

The draft NPF document highlights and recognises many key issues for planning for housing into the future. In Louth like many other counties, access to schools, health services, and employment all factor into people's residential choices. NPF 2040 must include supports allowing those who chose to live in rural areas to have real housing options.

NPF 2040 must consider strategies to develop planning and delivery of rural housing in Louth and beyond. This housing must be developed in conjunction with sufficient transport links and health and public services.

Local authorities must be encouraged to meet targets and increase provision of social housing. NPF should plan to include sufficient resources and supports to have local authorities do so and to ensure they meet future projected needs and demographic growth.

Flood Defences:

Coordination of relevant state agencies to plan for flooding defences is neither speedy nor adequate in areas of Louth prone to flooding. Sadly Louth is not an isolated region in this regard. Planning laws allowing building on floodplains and climate change mean flooding is now a regular feature for many people.

The draft NPF plan acknowledged many of these issues and NPF 2040 must ensure it commits to work closely with local authorities to plan and develop long term flood defences. This plan must also develop appropriate responses in vulnerable areas.

Health:

Census 2016 shows Louth has a population of 122,897. We know that many people cross the border to work and study. Anecdotal evidence also tells us that many people also access healthcare in both jurisdictions. Owing to significant waiting times, geographical residence and access to the cross border health schemes many living in north Louth make the 15km journey to Daisy hill hospital in Newry rather than the longer journey to Our Lady of Lourdes hospital in Drogheda.

NPF 2040 plan must recognise this and undertake to explore and develop all island health structures where possible and feasible.

People with disabilities:

NPF 2040 must include plans to address the disparity in how services for people with disabilities are provided in Louth and the greater CHO 8 area. In particular it should undertake to gather data and plan for the future needs for persons with disabilities in the region in areas such as respite care.

Sinn Féin support the call from Disability Federation Ireland for greater incorporation of, and provision for people with disabilities within NPF 2040 plan.

Accessible Transport must be part of the NPF 2040 plan. At present many people with a disability or mobility issues remain socially isolated as public transport still isn't fully wheelchair accessible. Many people in Louth are forced to phone or contact Bus Eireann or Irish Rail in advance of a planned journey to ensure they can access ramps or accessible vehicles.

People in the Traveller Community :

Census 2016 shows that 772 citizens from traveller community were enumerated in the county in April 2016. This was an increase of 113 (17.2%) on the number in 2011 (659). These citizens made up just over 1 in 200 (0.6%) of the county's population, compared with 0.7% at wider state level.

The traveller community is now recognised as an ethnic minority group. NPF 2040 must ensure that the particular needs reflected in all traveller community lifestyles are incorporated into local development plans, accommodation strategies and local area plans.

The NPF 2040 affords an opportunity to ensure a better quality of life for the traveller community through improved provision and access to services in Louth and beyond.

Education:

Third level institutions on both sides of the border in Louth are home to students and employees.

NPF 2040 should consider identifying what services in these regions could be shared. It should also seek to identify ways for more efficiency in ensuring training isn't needlessly replicated in small geographical areas.

MOU's- Memorandum's of Understanding between institutions on both sides of the border should be developed as part of NPF 2040.

Brexit:

Dundalk faces the prospect of being an urban centre within this state facing the impact of a potential international land border. Dundalk is currently twinned with Newry, which is 15 km away. Brexit will significantly impact both towns. It is incumbent on NPF 2040 to address Brexit as a priority in its plan, paying particular attention to addressing the economic, environmental, trade and transport implications.

The current MOU – Memorandum of Understanding between Louth Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council should be seen as a blueprint for best practise in developing cross border initiatives. NPF 2040 should examine how this arrangement can be developed to combat the Brexit impact in the region.

Spatial planning processes in both parts of the island would benefit from the harmonisation and integration of key data such as population, employment, transport, and environmental indicators. NPF 2040 should be cognisant of the benefits of such processes in Brexit preparation.

NPF 2040 should consider planning to establish a single island wide agency for the economy and a single agency to drive economic policy and strategy.

The north east region is anecdotally under-utilised in terms of potential economic contribution to the state, or indeed the island as a whole. A Border Economic Zone would be a valuable tool for areas like Louth to offset Brexit impact and should be considered as part of NPF 2040.

Investment Opportunities;

Louth is included within the Border Region IDA strategy 2015-2019. Louth is a region strategically placed in the heart of the Dublin/Belfast corridor, on the M1 Motorway as part of Strategic Euro route 1. The M1 also serves Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee, providing opportunities to establish businesses on the motorway network. The region provides unparalleled access to international airports based at Dublin and Belfast. Louth also has three commercial freight ports at Drogheda, Dundalk and Greenore.

Such attractiveness should translate into significant IDA backed jobs being created in the region. When IDA figures for such jobs are analysed and set against population numbers however, we see a significant difference in how these jobs are distributed. Louth figures show 453 jobs were created in Louth compared to 9000 jobs in Dublin. NPF 2040 must analyse the distribution of IDA backed jobs between large urban areas and rural and border regions.

Drogheda's IDA business park based in Co Meath. Because of its location it is subject to tolls in a way that no other IDA park is. Potential Investors are asked to pay a toll both on entry and exit of the town. NPF 2040 must seriously examine this situation and seek to remove such impediments to investment in the region.

Socio Economic indicators:

Dundalk has been shown as the poorest of nine gateway towns on deprivation indexes. Socio economic inequalities are spatially located, however neither the pre-draft plan, nor the draft NPF plan mapped out spatial distribution of socio economic indicators in terms of income, health or other indicators.

NPF 2040 must deal with spatial distribution of socio economic deprivation. Mapping would provide an opportunity to target infrastructure, employment and development which could then be integrated into the overall plan thereby ensuring greater levels of equality.