

**From:** Niall Kierans [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 28 October 2017 18:52  
**To:** National Planning Framework  
**Subject:** NPF 2040 Submission  
**Attachments:** Department of Housing Planning NPF 2040.docx

Dear Sirs

Please find attached a submission from myself re our National Planning Framework 2040

Sincerely yours  
Niall Kierans

Department of Housing Planning  
Community and local Government  
Custom House  
Dublin



Dear Sirs

**Re: Submission of Ireland NPF 2040**

As a resident and owner of a Business in the Town of Drogheda, may I take this opportunity to submit to you some views that I believe are relevant re, the Town of Drogheda.

Our **National Planning Framework 2040** strives, I believe, to provide some balance to Irelands future planning. This is of course admirable and desirable. Much of the conversation seems to favour directing away from mostly the East Coast, some of the projected growth that is expected in this area in the future.

While it is blatantly obvious that Dublin, as a growth centre, is 'powering ahead' this is much to the detriment of its Commuters, Residents and Accommodation seekers. Dublin City-Region suffers as a result a loss of competitiveness and become a less attractive place in which to invest because of housing and infrastructural bottlenecks,

**I believe that there is an argument to encourage some of Dublin's projected future growth towards its peripheral Towns. In this regard Drogheda is an obvious candidate.** As many of Dublin's much needed workforce emanate from Drogheda as daily commuters, who in turn contribute to the clogging of Dublin's traffic arteries.

The benefits to Drogheda, if economic activity is redirected in its favour, is improved employment prospects, reduced commuting times and stress for Drogheda residents who now secure work in their home Town. Reduced traffic and consequent carbon emissions on National routes and in Dublin itself. Reduced pressure on Commercial and Residential Property demands in Dublin with increased demand for both in the Town of Drogheda.

**Drogheda is Irelands largest Town**, per CSO statistics, and is projected to continue on a significant growth trajectory for the foreseeable future. As Irelands largest Town, Drogheda has a larger population than our smallest City, Kilkenny, and is soon to outgrow the population of our 5<sup>th</sup> largest City, Waterford. Indeed, such is Drogheda's confidence as a burgeoning Town that, moves are afoot to encourage the powers that be to grant Drogheda the return of **City Status** as our Town once enjoyed in the past.

**Drogheda is advantageously sited almost midway between Irelands two largest Cities, Dublin and Belfast.** A high-speed rail network links Drogheda effortlessly to both Cities. With the M1 motorway, Drogheda has, within a two-hour drive, ease of access to almost half, the island of Irelands, entire population. Dublin Airport is almost more accessible from Drogheda than South Dublin. Drogheda has its own Port and is less than an hour from Dublin Port.

As a large Town Drogheda offers a very attractive basket of benefits to outside investment. A large, young, educated workforce. Ample accommodation, both Commercial and Residential. Schools and Colleges, a Regional Hospital. A multitude of Historical and Cultural attractions. A vibrant Shopping, Restaurant, Bar, Theatre, Live Music and Nightlife offering. Excellent Beaches and Sporting activities, from Angling, Horseracing, Football, three excellent Links Golf Courses etc. Drogheda as a Town has much to offer those who chose it as a location for work or residency.

With substantial land banks and a healthy infrastructure. **Reliable Electricity Telecoms and Gas supplies** and abundant capacity in our **Wastewater Treatment capacity**, Drogheda lends itself as a very attractive base for FDI or indigenous Industries or Services.

While it may be desirable to encourage some economic activity away from the East Coast, it must be acknowledged that many of these activities want to be in vibrant locations and not some distant 'bywater'. As it is, **much of what inward investment seeks is already in-situ in the Town of Drogheda** and as such requires little by way of additional investment.

Drogheda as a Town has been cursed by way of being at the mercy, in the past, of the Planning whims of three Local Authorities. Louth County Council, Meath County Council and the former Drogheda Borough Council. Each of whom adopted plans for the Town, or its periphery, independently of each other, without recourse to how their plans may affect Drogheda overall. Because of this lack of 'joined-up thinking' Drogheda has suffered from egregious bad planning which has left the Town with a surplus of vacant and sometimes derelict Retail space.

Drogheda's development has been stunted in the past as decisions affecting the Town have for the most part been made in distant competing Authorities

Regrettably, **Drogheda, despite its size, location, and many assets, has not benefitted from any significant beneficial forward thinking in the past.** Much of these omissions seem to be at times politically motivated. This was particularly evident in our States last attempt to spread economic activity when our largest Town in the State was not even considered for Gateway or even Hub status.

Remarkably, despite being ignored in that now discredited plan, Drogheda, because of its attractiveness and its indomitable spirit, managed to outgrow all the other favoured Gateways and Hubs.

In conclusion I believe it would not be logical, or fair, to exclude **Drogheda from being a major part of our NPF 2040 plan.** Drogheda's population growth alone over the proposed period will force change, either planned or by default.

Drogheda has not tapped into its true potential in Industry, Services or in particular Tourism. **It will become either a powerhouse or an economic blackspot, and the NPF 2040 plan may dictate which.**

Sincerely yours

Niall Kierans

