

From: Martina Henry [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 October 2017 12:32
To: National Planning Framework
Subject: MAKE SLIGO A CITY

As a former busy owner in Sligo town, who only ceased trading due to a lack of availability of viable premises to tap into the limited footfall through the town, I have long stated that the only thing that Sligo needs is more people. Without them, it will continue to hemorrhage jobs, young people and the vibrancy that is required for growth and prosperity.

Having previously created jobs in Sligo, I now live in London, contributing to an economy that does well enough already, but where opportunities for creative, ambitious individuals are embraced and rewarded. I am here with with many others who would, no doubt, prefer to have a successful, viable career at home.

For our sake, and more importantly, for the next generation who will similarly have to flee, whether to Dublin, the U.K., or further afield, make Sligo a city, start investing in the development of the significant benefits it has to offer, and live up to the promises made in 1922 and build an Ireland we can all prosper in and be proud of.

One very simple, and much more cost-effective way, to spread development and wealth around our island would be to invest in a high-speed railway that allows people to work in Dublin or Cork if necessary, but will allow them to bring up their families with a higher standard of living in more rural areas, while also help contributing to those rural economies.

Cities such as Reading, Oxford and Stevenage, to name but a few, are all up to 70km away from London, yet can be reached in under 30minutes on an effective and high speed railway. Mullingar by comparison takes over an hour, and Sligo 3hours 5minutes, if we're lucky. A high-speed rail service wouldn't ease congestion on all major routes into cities, reduce associated pollution, allow dual access from Dublin to other parts of the country more readily, and overall reduce the reliance and necessity to force more and more development into the small, confined geographic area, that is Dublin County and the marginally wider Pale.

There are MANY other benefits to such a scenario, not least reduced burden on our; much-struggling health system; over-populated schools system; the elderly who increasingly don't have their younger family members on hand to help them; water services; and many other public services, not to mention the decline of Irish rural life that supports communities and tourism. A feasibility study would no doubt identify many more, and I have no doubt that a thorough cost-benefit analysis, factoring in these benefits, and those that would arise from the spread of population increases over the next 20 and 50 years, would overwhelmingly support this strategy.

I am shouting START.

Thank you,
Martina Henry