

From: Lauren McCullough [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 November 2017 18:10
To: National Planning Framework
Subject: National Planning Framework/Drogheda & Athlone

When I moved to Drogheda from Boston, Massachusetts, twenty years ago it felt like a small town to me, so I was surprised to find out it was, then, one of the largest towns in Ireland.

When they started talking about city status for Drogheda ten years ago I thought they were mad! This was partly because I didn't think I wanted to live in a city.

However, in the past twenty years Drogheda has grown immensely, in population, in infrastructure, and in the variety of people who now live here. It feels like a city now.

The motorway and the port are already here. We're well catered for already with bus and train routes, as well as the aforementioned motorway, for access to Dublin, Belfast, and beyond. We also have land to develop both business and housing. It would be foolish to ignore all this in terms of national planning. It would be a total waste of what is already here not to plan comprehensively for further development. If we don't plan properly for the sensible development of what's already here development will come, but it will be haphazard and very unsatisfactory.

Our proximity to both Dublin and Belfast makes us a very sensible place for the location of homes and businesses at more affordable rates than those cities offer. With a bit of internal planning the town would be a far more attractive location.

Drogheda is crying out for better and more sensible public transport in the town itself. We need the long-ago proposed Northern Cross Route to take heavy traffic out of the town and further develop the port. We need cycle paths! The point is: Drogheda is already half way there. A bit of attention within the National Framework would go a long way here.

I've also spent a lot of time in Athlone and the midlands over the years. The National Framework totally ignores this area. Athlone has many of the features of Drogheda and definitely deserves to be planned for as a city.

I also think this plan ignores our climate change responsibilities. We need people to get out of their cars. One way of doing this is to develop existing urban areas such as Drogheda and Athlone so that people can live and work without commuting for an hour and in many cases much more. Your plan is talking about further congesting already congested areas, rather than spreading development out sensibly around the country. Developing Drogheda and Athlone would take pressure off Dublin, lead to a better work/life balance for thousands of people.

Bring back our local government! Enda Kenny promised, when property tax was introduced, that we'd have more money to spend locally and we'd have "more democracy." Instead we have less money and less democracy.

It would be the height of wisdom and intellectual honesty to change your minds.

I am not a member of any political party or community organization with the exception of the Old Drogheda Society.

Truly yours,

Lauren McCullough

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