

Submission statement to make Drogheda a city.

I believe that Drogheda should be included as a major urban centre by the National Planning Framework for the following reasons.

The current situation is as follows;

- Drogheda is the largest town in the State, which will expand over the next number of years particularly to the north and north east once the northern link road is complete.
- It currently has some of the largest primary and post primary schools in the State.
- The town has very good transport links, including the M1 motorway (tolled) it is 30 minutes from Dublin Airport.
- It has good rail connections with both Dublin and Belfast. There were 4.718 million journeys made to Dublin in 2015 (Source- Rail Review Report 2016- National Transport Authority)
- Drogheda also has a long established sea port.
- The population for the town if you also include its hinterland is in excess of 80,000 people.
- The town is split between Louth County Council and Meath County Council. This is inefficient and leads to a situation where there is currently a campaign by locals to have a pedestrian crossing established at a busy road junction at Meadow View. On one side of the road it is Louth County Council and on the other side is Meath County Council. It would be far more efficient to have one local authority.
- Drogheda is gateway to the Boyne valley one of the most important historical areas in Ireland.

I would propose that you should consider the following;

- Establish the town as an entity with one local authority, this may be as a city with its own council similar to Waterford. I believe the recent boundary commission decision to continue the status quo to be seriously flawed.
- Create a third level college. There are large brown field site in and around the town centre.
- Invest in the Industrial Development Authority estates and infrastructure.
- Establish a Government Department or Office in Drogheda.
- Revise or abolish the tolls on the M1. Failing that, allow free access to Drogheda for commercial vehicles that require access to Drogheda.
- Because of the rail and motorway links it would be easier for people in north county Dublin to commute and study and work in Drogheda. The capacity on this line is approaching maximum so it is easier to travel out of Dublin than into Dublin.
- Develop the tourism potential, this will be highlighted in 2018 and 2019 when Drogheda hosts the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.
- The town has a history of inward investment particularly in food processing such as Boyne Valley Foods, East Coast Bakehouse, Boyne Brewhouse, Jack Cody Brewery. This is an area for further development

In brief I believe that if Drogheda is bypassed again for investment and development that a major opportunity will have been lost.

John M McKenna.