

Re: Submission to National Planning Framework

The Greater Drogheda Area – Designation as a City & Primary Development Centre

Date: November 9<sup>th</sup> 2017

Dr. Colm Faulkner, [REDACTED]

The first draft of the National Planning Framework failed to recognise Drogheda as one of the largest urban areas in the State. I propose that Drogheda and its full surrounding urban area in Louth/Meath be counted and administered as one single unitary urban area and designated as a City & Primary Development Centre in the National Planning Framework / Ireland 2040. 23 years is a long time [even Stalin only used 5 year planning cycles] – the current National Planning Framework fails to recognise the rapid vector of growth and development that Drogheda and surrounds has been on in the last 23 years, and it's potential to continue until 2040.

The Greater Drogheda Area has a population in the region of 80,000 people straddling Louth and Meath when Drogheda itself and the adjoining Laytown, Bettystown, Mornington (LBM) urban area are combined. It makes no sense for these areas to be counted in isolation of one another in either statistical or planning terms. Doing so leaves a huge gap in the services and infrastructure required and provided to what is actually one of Ireland's largest urban areas and deprives the State of an alternative Primary Development Area to counter congestion in Dublin. The Greater Drogheda Area including the town itself plus LBM should be counted as one contiguous interlinked urban area for statistical and planning purposes.

Drogheda was founded as two separate towns – Drogheda-in-Meath [est. 1194], and Drogheda –in-Oriel [i.e. Louth], so combining Drogheda and East Meath has precedent. We further note that Drogheda was a frequent meeting place of parliament in the Middle Ages.

Drogheda must be recognised properly in terms of scale and status to reach it's potential in the attraction of FDI. Drogheda is on a par in terms of surrounding infrastructure and location with parts of Fingal such as Swords and the Airport Zone and major urban centres such as Galway and Limerick but attracts much less Foreign Direct Investment. Drogheda has the potential to be a major economic hub with a critical mass of employment opportunities which would end the daily commuting misery into Dublin City for thousands of people in the Louth/Meath/North County Dublin areas and reduce inbound traffic and rail line congestion on the M1/M2 and Northern Rail Line services. Drogheda, as strong vibrant city in terms of economics, sporting heritage, history and culture to the north of Dublin, will serve as a critical spring board to launch initiatives to address the Brexit opportunity.

Drogheda's absence from the previous National Spatial Strategy should be addressed by nominating the full urban area as a city and Primary Development Centre in the National Planning Framework.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Colm Faulkner