

Submission by Cllr. Sharon Tolan, Meath County Council, to the National Planning Framework

To Whom It May Concern,

I warmly welcome the decision to create a framework to guide the planning and development of the country over the years to 2040, and offer my own thoughts on same, in relation to the constituents I represent in the Municipal District of Laytown-Bettystown in the county of Meath. The constituents I represent will undoubtedly be impacted on decisions made in relation to both Meath and Louth, given the proximity to County Louth and given that the actual town of Drogheda straddles both counties.

Some statistics that I believe should be given consideration are the following:-

CSO 2016

	<u>Laytown-Bettystown</u>	<u>Drogheda</u>
Population	33,752	44,052
Persons in families	29,898	37,438
At Work	13,982	17,533
Leave their homes before 7.30am for work, school, college	6,401	6,535
Travel 45mins+	1,915	1,561
Travel 1hour+	3,411	3,131
Household more than 1 car	10,010	11,917
Travel work by train	501	524
Travel work by bus	805	854
Travel work by car	9,764	11,030

These numbers show that we are failing dismally in relation to providing public transport and/or job and educational opportunities within a reasonable commute time. Our communities are spending longer and longer in cars and on roads that are becoming increasingly congested.

I welcome the recognition given in the Draft, to the importance of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, and respectively suggest that inclusion of the economic development of the Meath and Louth areas of Laytown-Bettystown and the wider Drogheda area be included. Together with accessibility improvements such as the provision of the Leinster Outer Orbital Route, Navan Rail, electrification of the Norther train line, would have a significant positive impact on the lives of the combined population of 77,804, and indeed in the lives of residents of both counties.

In relation to public transport, it is crucial as a matter of urgency, that fairer fares are offered to commuters. We continue to ensure that the use of the train line is out of the economic reach

of most of our commuters, with fares 3 times more than nearby Balbriggan. This is one of the key reasons we continue to see so many cars on our roads.

22,000 vehicles are traveling through the sleepy village of Julianstown every day of the week. The Julianstown Bypass is a must for the government's Capital Plan. That, combined with fairer fares, and improved accessibility would have a very positive impact on commute times.

In relation to 6.3 of the Draft, Ports, I would strongly support the move of Dublin Port to Gormonston, Co Meath. Dublin continues to be choked by traffic, and in dire need of extra high-rise housing solutions. The growth of Dublin Port in it's current location is clearly not possible, and the position of Gormonston, County Meath is ideal for deep water economic development.

I would welcome the upgrade of Drogheda Town to City Status, given that no changes to county boundaries would be recommended. A dual county local administration would be of benefit to both counties, and could see delivery of job and educational opportunities for the constituents I represent.

Yours,

Cllr Sharon Tolan