

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find my submission to the National Planning Framework.

I cautiously welcome the news that county Meath has seen a population increase of 5.9% since 2011. I encourage and implore the Department to reflect this increase in population with an increase of local service such as, housing, schools, health care and recreational facilities. The increase of 5.9% is one of largest increases of population in the country. Our population now stands at almost 195,000, which is an increase of 10,807 people living in county Meath. It is imperative that investment is delivered to every corner of the county for essential services. The National Planning Framework for Meath must reflect this increase in population.

One area that requires serious improvement is the proliferation of playgrounds and open spaces particularly in the new towns of county Meath such as Ashbourne and Ratoath. The framework should reflect this need.

As the Department will be aware there had been a proposal under the Transport 21 programme to reopen the Navan rail line from the existing M3 Parkway Station to Navan. However, this project was deferred due to the reduction in the capital investment programme. The proposed extension consisted of 34km of railway line with stations located at Dunshaughlin, Kilmessan, Navan town centre and a further station on the northern edge of Navan. This project was costed in a 2011 feasibility study at €332 million. The project is absolutely crucial to be progressed if we are serious about rail in this country. In relation to the Navan rail line, I wish to point out that any proposed station in the Dunshaughlin area must be located within a short walking distance of the town. It would be a huge mistake if this station would be located outside the town. The NTA should also not rule out the extended train line serving the large town of Ratoath before making its way to Dunshaughlin and on to Navan. While I am calling for the reinstatement of the Navan rail line, many Kells residents feel that when and if Navan is being constructed, it would be cost effective and beneficial to extend to Kells. I agree with them. Kells and the wider North meath area, would benefit no end if the Rail.

The Department need to deliver a major examination, in respect of the N2 road because of ongoing safety issues and continued inadequacies. The general effectiveness of the road as a national route must be investigated.

The National Planning Framework should also take cognisance of the need for the Dublin Outer Orbital Road in order to relieve the M50. I would urge the Department to consider this project as part of the framework.

The Department needs to implement a solid policy on dealing with planning applications for industrial windfarms across the country. There have been applications to the national planning authority in recent years to construct huge wind turbine farms which are not accepted by the local community. The Framework must protect the residents of these communities. I also note there have been a number of applications to Meath County Council for planning permission for Solar Farms. As there are currently no national

guidelines for the development of these solar farms, developers are required to observe the objectives of the local county development plan.

Le meas,

Thomas Byrne TD (Meath East)

Deputy Thomas Byrne TD

Meath-East

01 6183310