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OPEN LETTER TO THE AUTHORS OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMWORK 2040

The “Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework” (“**NPF**”) is not fit for purpose. It uses a patchwork of local authority plans as a foundation stone for its national plan. It ignores problems in local government boundaries and is blinded by those same boundaries.

Is Droichead Átha a Place?

On page 17 the **NPF** draft plan comments on the importance of “community, land and place” to the Irish psyche. It comments on the “heritage and identity associated with place”. Blinded by county boundary lines the **NPF** goes on to ignore certain “places”.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Droichead Átha – a city governed by two regional authorities based in Navan and Dundalk. The authors of the **NPF** think northern Droichead Átha is a large regional town in Louth. Comically they consider that part of our city south of the river Bóinne as part of rural Meath. It is part of Meath, but is also part of our city. Do they not know that Droichead Átha is one place? Everybody else does.

Droichead Átha is an 800 year old port city. From the Salmon of Knowledge to the Cromwellian siege, or the Battle of the Boyne to Saint Oliver Plunkett, Droichead Átha has never been far from Ireland’s history. Today our bustling city serves a population of 80,000. It is the fifth largest city in Ireland. It is served by the same international airport as Dublin City. Yet it does not feature in the **NPF**. The **NPF** can see Limerick, Galway and Waterford – but not Droichead Átha!

Does the NPF transcend county boundary lines?

On page 10 the **NPF** says it will “introduce more strategic and co-ordinated planning of our cities and large towns across local authority boundaries”. Yet it does not do this for Droichead Átha. Do the authors of the **NPF** really think that it is a good idea that county council staff in both Navan and

Dundalk should administer local services for Droichead Átha? Do the authors of the **NPF** really think that local authority staff in Navan and Dundalk is best placed to advocate for Droichead Átha?

The National Planning Framework seeks to anticipate and solve the problems of the future while blithely ignoring the problems of the present. A plan built on a patchwork of competing local authority plans is hopelessly inadequate not just for Droichead Átha, but for Ireland.

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