

From: Icon Video.ie <info@iconvideo.ie>
Sent: 10 November 2017 10:29
To: National Planning Framework
Subject: Submission to National Planning Framework by David McConnon
Attachments: Submission to National Planning Framework by David McConnon.pdf

Please find attached and in the body of this email my submission to the National Planning Framework.

Submission to National Planning Framework

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

Date: 10.11.17

From: David Mc Connon, Video Producer, IconVideo.ie

As a video producer of corporate marketing and educational videos, Drogheda is a great base due to its location and broadband. Yet it remains a hidden gem to most outside of the area. Upon visiting for work or leisure, many are surprised at Drogheda's proximity to Dublin and its variety of locations in such a small geographical area – city, countryside, beaches, rivers, historical features. Ignored for too long – Drogheda has been an unemployment blackspot for decades – the town has grown to city proportions and requirements, despite successive governments' lack of interest and initiative. Clogged and overcrowded, accommodation and infrastructure in Dublin cannot meet demand. With its excellent location, transport links and broadband Drogheda is ideally placed to ease pressure on Dublin. Drogheda's designation as a city is not only common sense but very practical for the long term development of the entire eastern part of Ireland.

In response to the first draft of the National Planning Framework, which failed to recognise Drogheda as one of the largest urban areas in the State, I wish to propose that Drogheda and its full surrounding urban area in both Louth and 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.

The Greater Drogheda Area has a population in the region of 80,000 people straddling both counties 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 actually 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.

The area surrounding Drogheda stretching from South Louth down through the town itself and on to the Meath Coast is a contiguous urban area that forms a natural geographical entity which should be recognised as one city.

Until such time as the size and population of Drogheda is recognised properly through the recognition of its real status issue the area will not reach its full potential for 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 for the North East region 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, using the outbound lanes on the M1/M2/N2/R152 and empty outbound morning trains and buses on northern commuter services.

Drogheda's true size both in urban spread and population size needs to be represented more accurately in census data and national statistics which inform Government and Local Authority decisions on planning, resource allocation and prioritisation for public services and promotion of foreign direct investment. 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



David M. Gorman

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