

**By email to [npf@housing.gov.ie](mailto:npf@housing.gov.ie)**

Cootehill Chamber of Commerce and

Cootehill Area Development Ltd

White Star Complex

Market St

Cootehill

30/03/17

**RE: NPF Submission to Forward Planning Section, Department of Housing Planning, Community and Local Government, Custom House, Dublin D01 W6X0.**

Cavan & Monaghan shows continued resilience despite difficulties of location along the Northern Ireland Border, distance from major cities and despite continued lack of investment in roads infrastructure – Cootehill Town in the centre of Cavan & Monaghan is an example of a successful enterprise town with numbers employed in SMEs & their economic contribution to the town enabling them to be self-sustaining - this important function needs to be acknowledged & supported at a national level. Agri food business and engineering is a major indigenous industry in the region and ensures survival of agricultural economic activity in the area (poultry).

The East West road must remain an objective for Ireland 2040 - consultation, road improvements & survey work between Co Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Leitrim and Sligo have been carried out and this expenditure of over €2 million on resources must not be in vain. The route from Dundalk, Carrickmacross, Shercock, Cootehill, Cavan, Belturbet, Enniskillen and on to Sligo has potential to enable major economic growth along the route corridor, whilst providing strong connectivity and increased tourism activity between Ireland's ancient east & the Wild Atlantic way.

Blueways Ireand - extension of the Shannon Erne Blueway from Belturbet to Cootehill to Ballybay via the Dromore river system is also a project that offers huge potential to the midland counties for tourism and economic gain. This extension of the successful Erne blue way can be completed with relatively small investment but needs support and backing nationally to raise the profile and importance of the project.

Cootehill town is situated in the heart of the Cavan/Monaghan region surrounded by drumlins, rivers and lakes of unique landscape quality. We fully recognise the benefit these natural amenities bring our communities. However the limited opportunities directed towards small towns like Cootehill will become more scarce due to the competition from the larger county towns to secure IDA led industries and the ethos from Government to direct FDI to the major cities. Notwithstanding this, the self-sustaining town of Cootehill receives huge boosts, both socially and economically from larger national projects like those referenced.

Cootehill Chamber believes that Government initiatives and Capital funding should be focused on encouraging and developing home grown businesses and entrepreneurs as well as attracting inward investment to the border region. The roads infrastructure within County Cavan and Monaghan and the development of the Border Regions East-West strategic Transport Corridor from Dundalk to Sligo is a very urgent Border Regional project which now needs to be delivered to the region to help reduce costs and travel time for major employers like Abbotts, ABCON, Carlton Cakes, Lakeland Dairies, Town of Monaghan, Carton Brothers and Manor Farms.

- Adequate high speed Broadband including tier 1 fibre needs to be rolled out throughout Cootehill to allow businesses to grow and expand into the future. This will encourage investment in possible data centres in our area due to the availability of natural gas and green wind energy.
- There is a wealth of natural beauty and heritage in Cootehill which requires further investment towards tourist based activities such as water sports, walking, cycling trails, boating and fishing.

Yours Sincerely,

Richard Conlon, Secretary, Cootehill Chamber of Commerce.

& Vera Greenan, Secretary, Cootehill Area Development Ltd.