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Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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I wish to make a brief submission to you in respect of the above and it relates solely to the position of Portlaoise in this new plan.

The NSS designated Portlaoise as a 'National Inland Port' -- a phrase which was scarcely heard of again after the original launch.

Despite it's meaningless designation, Portlaoise has shown it's natural resilience by improving the quality the of life in it's area thus resulting in population increases over the following years;

2002-----2006	14,613	up 20.5%
2006-----2011	20,145	up 37.9%
2011-----2016	21,839	up 8.4%

These increases have come about despite lack of investment by Government agencies e.g. IDA or Enterprise Ireland who were charged with encouraging and fostering 'balanced regional development'.

I submit that Portlaoise can no longer be placed within the Midland Region but rather associated with the GDA, as the town has much more in common with the capital rather than Athlone/Mullingar/Tullamore. To leave us in the same area would be a great disservice to those of us who have struggled to enhance the status of our capital town.

To support my contention, I suggest that we should be deemed a satellite town of Dublin and the following two examples will support this.

(A) To protect and enhance the level of health services in the area, it is fully accepted by medical personnel that linkages with some Major Dublin Hospitals is an essential ingredient.

(B) To ensure reasonable access to 3rd level education for those who cannot afford it, a link with a Dublin University which would foster and support our existing 3rd level outreach centre here is essential.

Furthermore, as most FDI seems to be primarily drawn to Dublin, I submit that if Portlaoise were seen to be a partner with, or a satellite of the Dublin area, it would be far easier to achieve our objective of balanced regional development.

I could give some other examples but my local authority has made it's own submission and I'm attempting to look around the corner for other ways of enhancing the best town in Ireland.

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