

Deeфорde Residents' Association

This submission is being made to outline the case for the inclusion of the town and environs of Drogheda (Co. Louth/Co. Meath) as a first-tier development centre leading to the ultimate designation of the area as a city.

Never been well represented politically – demonstrated by the omission of Drogheda from the National Spatial Strategy in 2002 and the classification in the original NPF plan issued this year. Drogheda has not had a front bench TD in government in living memory and is invisible on the national stage as a result. Drogheda Borough Council was eliminated a few years ago and now all decisions are made in Dundalk. Failte Ireland is promoting Limerick and Tipperary as part of Ireland's Ancient East. The lack of political representation should not be a factor in deciding on the planning for such a large population for the next 20 years.

Excellent transport links – brilliant road (M1 N2), rail, sea (Drogheda Port, River Boyne) and air links (it takes the same length of time to get to Drogheda from Dublin airport as it does to get into Dublin city centre).

Very large population – As confirmed in the last census, Drogheda is the largest town in the country with a population far in excess of some of the other "cities" in the country. When the population of the greater Drogheda area is added in, the figures are even more compelling.

Rich history and heritage – Drogheda is a very important town in the history of the country. The Battle of the Boyne took place in Drogheda, Newgrange is on the outskirts of the town, St. Laurence's Gate is the best example of a barbican gate in Europe and there are many other examples of the great culture of the Boyne Valley area. The town is much more than a commuter base for people working in Dublin and has its own identity.

A divided town which could be brought together – as everyone knows, the town straddles Louth and Meath. Our estate is located in the Meath part of Drogheda, adjacent to the Louth border and it is clear that the lack of focus on Drogheda at present by any government body is preventing the town from reaching its potential. Louth is run from Dundalk and Meath is run from Navan. One simple example is the fact that the footpath towards Drogheda town from our estate ends abruptly at the Louth border and pedestrians are forced to cross a very dangerous road to proceed towards the town. Another is the fact that our nearest proper Garda station is in Ashbourne (not Drogheda because we live in Meath). Historical Louth/Meath biases were the reason the recent boundary review did not achieve progress. However, if the town and its environs were to become a first-tier development centre which would ultimately lead to it becoming a city, this would all fall to one side and we genuinely believe everyone would then look inwards and forward to developing the potential of the area.

A proud town on the up – Notwithstanding the lack of support from Government, the town has some great successes to show, none more so than the fact that the town will host the Fleadh Cheoil in 2018. The winning of this bid shows the potential of the town when people come together with a common purpose and we have no doubt that the Fleadh will be a huge success in Drogheda. The people of Drogheda know this and want to be able to build on the exposure the Fleadh will afford in order to catapult Drogheda into its rightful place as a very important tourist destination in the country. Focus and assistance that would result from being a first-tier development centre would greatly help this.

Facts speak for themselves – any objective assessment which has not been clouded by political short term views or self-interest will result in Drogheda being included as a first-tier development centre in the long term planning for this country. All we, the people of Drogheda ask, is that the facts be allowed to come to the forefront of the decision making process. We can then set about the exciting task of getting Drogheda and its environs to reach its full and enormous potential.

Ciaran Leddy
Chairperson

Aaron O'Neill
Treasurer

10 November 2017

