

## Simon Musial

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**From:** Ambrose <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 23 January 2019 14:08  
**To:** RSES  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Submission on Draft Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy  
**Attachments:** Ash FG Draft Reg and Spatial & Economic Strategy Jan 19.docx

Dear Chairperson,

I formally submit our comments on the Draft Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy of Nov 2018.

There are serious concerns in South East County Meath that the strategy is seriously flawed as it does not deal adequately with needs of 100,000 people residing in Ashbourne and sister towns such as Dunshaughlin and Ratoath.

The strategy fails to understand the significant and vitally important strong economic and social connectivity of South East County Meath with Dublin City, Dublin Airport and North County Dublin.

We urge you to modify the plan in the light of our evidence based submission.

Yours sincerely,

Ambrose McLoughlin

Hon Secretary, Ashbourne Branch Fine Gael

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## Ashbourne Municipal District and the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. 22/1/19



### Executive Summary

1. The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly draft Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy ignores the fact that Ashbourne is strategically located in South of County Meath with the Dublin catchment. Ashbourne is an important town with a growing population with huge dependency on Dublin City. Ashbourne and its sister towns, bar Dunboyne, are not referred to the Draft Strategy. Similar sized and smaller towns in the Metropolitan Area are given high priority for development and funding.
2. A new major urban centre of "South East County Meath" has emerged in the last two decades, which the Draft Strategy has completely ignored. Excluding the Ashbourne Municipal District from the Dublin Metropolitan Area and its strategic planning, is a grave error of judgment and makes absolutely no sense. Ashbourne has a strong synergy with the city in a polycentric metropolitan area. Ashbourne has the third youngest population in the country with very highly skilled workforce with

significant levels of educational attainments. Ashbourne Municipal District has a population of 29,178 (2016 Data). The 2021 figure is likely to be close to 33,000. Nearby Ratoath and Laytown/ Bettystown Municipal Districts have populations of the order of 33,500 (2016 data) each. The 2016 figure for all 3 Municipal Districts is over 100,000 (estimate). Any spatial strategy plan for the Metropolitan Area of Dublin must give careful consideration to the potential of South East Meath to take serious pressure of the City Centre of Dublin in the decades ahead.

3. In recent years, Ashbourne has seen some development with the creation of a fledgling small new town centre, limited new education facilities and many new estates for the growing population.
4. County Meath is emerging as Ireland's number one business destination. Ashbourne has a highly educated workforce, 80% of whom work in the City of Dublin. 400 Businesses currently operate in Ashbourne. There is a strong case to be made for formal collaborative working between Fingal County Council and Meath County Council to shape the future of Ashbourne and District, given its proximity to Dublin Airport and Dublin City centre. Ashbourne is very heavily dependent and absolutely reliant on the Metropolitan area for work, services and education. Enhancing cooperation between Meath County Council, Fingal County Council to promote more synergistic land management and development of underutilised, brown field public and private land will seriously enable the orderly and evidence based economic and social development of the Dublin Metropolitan Area.
5. Given the dependency on Dublin City significant investment in public transport for the Ashbourne Municipal District is essential. The above Map shows the Metro North to Ashbourne, Dunboyne to the Navan Rail line, and travel times from Ashbourne. Ashbourne is about 8 or 9 miles or a 20 minute journey to Dublin Airport. Situated on the M2 motorway, Ashbourne links to the M50, the Dublin Orbital Motorway in just 15minutes, Dublin City Centre is 25 minutes from Ashbourne. Ashbourne is part of the Boyne Valley and Ireland's Ancient East. Ashbourne needs to improve accessibility and service by rail, road and communication.
6. The major developments and investments by Facebook, Shire and Avoca in South County Meath are indicative of this transformation. An entirely new vision for this growing part of County Meath is urgently required, to include rapid rail access to the City and Dublin Airport, a new Urban Vision and Urban Design framework for the area, and a fully resourced dedicated Urban Planning team within Meath County Council for South East Meath. This Team will work very effectively with colleagues in Fingal and Dublin City Council.
7. Ashbourne is a significant commuter town with a very weak level of services and functions for its resident population. 80% of the population of Ashbourne commute to work in the city. Ashbourne is not a sustainable town with a thriving local economy. Ashbourne lacks appropriate levels of services and amenities for a District of its size and potential. This will always be the case because of its dependency and proximity to Dublin City Centre.
8. Providing employment and services for the Ashbourne Municipal District must be prioritised. Investing in and providing amenities such as public parks and public parks in Ashbourne will enhance the attractiveness of the area supporting active lifestyles and health and wellbeing.

## **Executive Summary of the required infrastructure developments that will take pressure of the Dublin City Centre**

- **New large Campus University in the South East Meath Area near Dublin Airport and City of Dublin is required for a growing population. This could provide a satellite campus for nearby Dublin City University. Student accommodation for the greater Dublin area could be provided very cost effectively in Ashbourne and district. Continued investment in the primary and second level education system will be essential. The proposed University Campus should include a smart technology driven ambulatory care health and welfare facility.**
- **A fundamental shift is required to address our under-utilised economic development potential given Ashbourne's location beside M50 and Airport. Dublin Airport is one of the best connected Airports in Europe. We seek strategic land banks for future Industrial and Commercial uses in South East Meath to provide employment in South East Meath.**
- **A dual carriageway from Swords to Dunshaughlin linking the M1, M2 and M3 and M4 should be considered.**
- **We urge the extension of Metro North from the Airport to Ashbourne, Ratoath and Dunshaughlin. We recommend the rail link from Dunboyne to Navan to run East of Dunshaughlin.**

### **Ashbourne's Contribution – Taking the pressure of Dublin City and Fingal County.**

South East Meath is a part of the Greater Dublin Area, and due to its proximity to the Airport and M50, our submission is that South East Meath should be considered in the context of the strategic planning and urban design of the Metropolitan Area of Dublin. The provision of high quality water and waste services, smart energy, smart telecommunication including high speed broadband, will enable future smart economic and social development and meet the needs of an increasing population.

