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Eastern & Midland regional Assembly
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23rd January, 2019

**RE: Submission on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
for the Eastern and Midland Region**

Dear Regional Assembly Members,

I am writing to you today on behalf of my constituents in Meath East in regard to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region.

I respectfully request that the following key points be accepted as my submission for your consideration and inclusion in the finalisation of the RSES:

1. **Dunboyne** is the sole Meath centre of population currently designated in the metropolitan area. Section 5.4 of the MASP sets out the Strategy for future development in Dunboyne with reference made to the sequential development of lands in Dunboyne and Dunboyne North which is at variance with variation no 3 of the Meath County Development Plan. It is critical to ensure that no restrictions are placed on delivery of a 'live- work' community at Dunboyne North, as such it is therefore essential that the reference to sequential development in the town is amended in line with the recommendations of Meath County Council. Finally, the inclusion of Dunboyne in the list of Metropolitan settlements that can benefit from the transfer of population from Dublin City and Suburbs is very much warranted.
2. **Dunshaughlin** is an important growth town in the midst of extensive new home building, with 6no. active building sites at present. Circa 2,000 plus new homes will be delivered over the next short number of years; therefore it is essential that an additional key road infrastructure be delivered to the South West of the town linking the R147 to the M3 access network. The near doubling of the population in

Dunshaughlin will also deliver the critical mass required to sustain the next phase of the Dublin - Navan rail line thus improving the economy, reducing the numbers of commuters travelling South Meath to travel into Dublin on a daily basis and delivering improved economic and positive environmental benefits. A review of the Metropolitan boundary to consider the designation and inclusion of Dunshaughlin must be considered.

3. **Ratoath** is the fourth largest town in Meath with 70% of the workforce travelling to Dublin each day. Improved reliable public transport is essential for the residents of Ratoath as is the completion of the outer relief road from Moulden Bridge to the Fairyhouse Road, so as to vastly reduce traffic congestion in Ratoath and improve transport links to M3 and Ashbourne. The opportunity for future development with the equine industry, located close to the town centre, has been identified in the Economic Development Strategy. Developing a business campus with a Hotel and independent sports campus complete with swimming pool would greatly encourage commercial investment and local job creation.

Social infrastructure is vastly lacking at present, considering the current population of circa 9,500 against the reality of the existence of only a single playground; additional playgrounds and recreational parklands is a vital requirement for Ratoath. The upgrade to the water infrastructure is now expected to be completed over the next three years; this long awaited delivery will dramatically improve the daily lives of the residents of this town along with giving reassurance to commercial and retail traders thus creating the potential for more local employment. A review of the Metropolitan boundary to consider the designation and inclusion of Ratoath must be considered.

4. **Ashbourne** is the second largest town in Meath, and is one of the fastest growing towns in the county. It is an important employment and service centre in that it supports almost 2,000 jobs with many of these jobs concentrated in the recently redeveloped town centre and a number of business and industrial parks in the northern part of the town. Transport, distribution and logistics, and retailing and wholesaling, are important sectors for the town, reflecting its favourable location, including its proximity to Dublin Port and Dublin Airport.

The importance of Ashbourne as a centre for employment growth in Meath is demonstrated by its inclusion as one of 5 strategically important settlements designated to attract FDI in the Economic Development Strategy. A review of the Metropolitan boundary to consider the designation and inclusion of Ashbourne must be considered.

5. **County** Continued support for infrastructural investment in the County (in particular Phase 2 of the Navan Rail Project) to improve connectivity and the attractiveness of the County as a location of choice for economic investment.

Your support in this matter is very much appreciated.

Kind Regards,



Regina Doherty TD
Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection

