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From: Aidan Browne <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 23 January 2019 16:10
To: RSES
Subject: Dundalk Institute of Technology response to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
Attachments: Dundalk Institute of Technologys resposne to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 23-01-19.pdf
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To whom it may concern

Please find attached the Dundalk Institute of Technology response to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region

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Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region

Public Consultation

Dundalk Institute of Technology welcome the opportunity to respond to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region with 5 main observations.

1. To contextualise this point:
The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) was established on 1st January 2015 with Louth moving from the BMW Regional Assembly. The RSES will replace the current Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) which Louth previously was included in the Border RPG. The BMW Regional Assembly was restructured with Cavan and Monaghan remaining and being re-named as the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA).
While the RSES outlines a preferred regional parity scenario between the EMRA, the NWRA and the Southern Region Assembly it lacks any clarity as to how the assemblies can complement each other particularly in light of for example the cross county collaborations between Cavan, Louth, Monaghan and Meath.
2. Dundalk Institute of Technology has a regional remit that includes all of Louth County and therefore within the Regional Policy Objectives for Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre it should replicate the Regional Policy Objectives for 4.18 outlined for Dundalk ie Support the role of Dundalk Institute of Technology as a centre of excellence for education.
3. The overview of both Dundalk and Drogheda should have mention of The Dundalk Institute of Technology's Regional Development Centre who have supported establishing and growing the regional economic base, which is an important focal point for the development and strengthening of industry and higher education links in research and development (R&D). (Similar to the text on Athlone that references the work of AIT and the MIRC).
4. While there is an RPO (#4.17) to enhance Dundalk as a strategic employment centre on the Dublin-Belfast corridor availability of accommodation is a significantly strained factor for attracting inward investment, the employment growth of existing businesses and the current and future growth plans of Dundalk Institute of Technology. There should be an additional RPO for the Dundalk Regional Growth Centre to support further development of housing initiatives and particularly student type accommodation. RPO 4.22 suggests a Core strategies in Local Authority development plans shall support objectives to achieve a minimum of 30% of housing in key towns but there should also be quantified targets for Regional Growth Centres including Dundalk and Drogheda.
5. The draft RSES identifies a third tier of Key Towns which are Swords, Maynooth, Bray, Navan, Naas, Wicklow-Rathnew, Longford, Mullingar, Tullamore, Portlaoise and Graiguecullen (Carlow) which will be supported in their capacity to act as regional drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres. However with none of the third tier Key Towns listed being geographically located where they would be likely to compliment Dundalk as a Regional Growth Centre there are concerns that growth parity across the three Regional Growth Centres may be at risk.