

## Heather Cooke

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**From:** Geoff Fitzpatrick <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 23 January 2019 16:15  
**To:** RSES; Niall Kierans  
**Subject:** LOVEDROGHEDA Submission on the RSES EMRA  
**Attachments:** LOVEDROGHEDA Business Improvement district Working Group Submission RSES.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi,

Please find attached our second submission on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern Midlands Region.

Regards,

**Geoff Fitzpatrick**  
**Drogheda BID Proposal Working Group**

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## **LOVEDROGHEDA Business Improvement District (BID) Working Group Submission**

The LOVEDROGHEDA BID working group was set up in late 2018, with the objective of setting up a BID in Drogheda. The working group is currently made up of over 120 businesses / rate payers in the district. A BID proposal was submitted to Louth County Council in December 2018 and it is planned that the proposal will go to a plebiscite in June 2019, with a planned enactment in July 2019.

This BID was formed as a result of growing optimism and positivity with regard to the development of Drogheda City's business community. During the formation of the BID proposal a number of workshops were held to get the views and ideas of Drogheda business community.

We submit the following with regard to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy:

### **Drogheda City Governance and Management**

#### **RSES Objective – Growth Strategy – Drogheda Local Area Plan or Strategic Development Zone**

Our existing governance and management systems are not suited to the current and future requirements of our city. We are one of the fastest growing urban centres in Ireland. Our city tranverses two county boundaries and all executive and management decisions regarding the development of our city are made in Dundalk or Navan. This results in piecemeal uncoordinated development and an unfavourable bias towards the development of Dundalk or Navan at Drogheda's expense.

Examples of this include, location of government enterprise offices, location of FDI sites and the location of local authority executive offices.

This unfavourable bias has had a very negative impact on Drogheda's economic and social development. Through the RSES we want to see a very fundamental change in this unfavourable bias.

We propose that a new local authority region be enacted to allow for the development of the Drogheda BID district and the East Meath areas of Mornington, Bettystown, Laytown, Julianstown, with a combined population of 52,828 people (CSO 2016).

### **Drogheda's Migratory Workforce**

#### **RSES Objective – Quality of Life / Travel Patterns**

Drogheda has a migratory workforce of 6,845 people (a total workforce of 13,062) (CSO 2016) who travel to work outside of Drogheda, primarily to Dublin. This is a significant daily talent and resource drain to Drogheda.

We need to see a move away from developing Drogheda as a commuter town and development region for Dublin's workforce.

Drogheda loses half its working talent each day to Dublin. Our workforce invest their time in companies, that pay rates to Dublin authorities and assist in the development of talent, wealth and investment outside of Drogheda.

On lots of different levels this is not good for Drogheda. If 6,845 people spend E5.00 each day on lunch, their lunch money alone, would create an additional 60 jobs in Drogheda.

Lost productivity time in travelling to and from work is a serious waste of resource and adds massively to our carbon emissions.

If this migratory workforce each spend 2 hours per day commuting, that's 68,450 man hours per week or 9,127 man days per week. This time is lost family time, lost community time, where people can engage with their communities. If only 25% of this lost time was put to productive work, this would equate to 456 people working full time for a year.

Not all of the 6,845 workers can work in Drogheda. But we should target to get 10 – 15% of them working in Drogheda from 2019 – 2024, and over the next 10 years work on getting 30% to relocate to Drogheda.

These people are productive and add to the local economy. They are professional and skilled workers. Some of them will be entrepreneurs and will employ themselves and others in productive work. It is likely for each job relocated to Drogheda, a further additional job will be created.

In the short term this could lead to upwards of 1,500 jobs be created in the local economy.

They will also be more productive and make a contribution to the development of local communities. They are more likely to be active members of local sports clubs, utilise local hospitality services more often and overall make a very positive contribution to the local community and Drogheda's development.

## **Drogheda's Urban Retail, Hospitality, Workspace Mix**

### **RSES Objective – Functional Urban Areas**

Drogheda's retail economy in the 1970's grew from a strong industrial base and a rural hinterland of customers who traditionally came into town on a weekly basis. The industrial base has long since gone and changes to the way people shop and transact for clothes, services and general purchases are impacting on our city centre.

Buildings and spaces need to be reconfigured to accommodate workspaces, for small, medium and large businesses.

Spaces also need to be created to develop authentic, local hospitality businesses, serving quality locally produced food and drink.

We now need to look at the future development of our city and what activities will be carried out in the city centre.

We believe there needs to be a change in the mix. It is likely that retail will not be the dominant activity in the city centre and that this will be complimented by a range of hospitality and workspace activities.

## Drogheda City Planning

### **RSES Objective - A sustainable competitive region that promotes health living and well being**

In the past, large housing developments were built in Drogheda and elsewhere without any consideration for, services, schools, workspace or leisure facilities. This facilitated the development of a “commuter town” and neglected the development of a strong local economy.

The greater Drogheda area has to be developed as a fully formed space, that not only has housing space, but also working and leisure spaces. Additional houses cannot be planned without appropriate working spaces for people to work in and leisure space on their time off, to enjoy family time and interaction with their community and neighbours.

Our city cannot be developed as a commuter city. Long term this will have a serious negative impact on the community capital and economic development of Drogheda.

Work spaces need to be planned for start up businesses, for medium sized business and for large national and foreign direct investment enterprises.

Some workspace will be suited for direct access to motor networks and others will suit in town, and combine well with hospitality businesses. These are likely to be service based high human resource businesses.

## Drogheda’s Transport and Accessibility Systems

### **RSES Objective - Sustainable Transport Systems**

Accessibility – Real joined up thinking is required for Drogheda city centre accessibility. As our city grows we need to plan and manage accessibility requirements.

This involves the development of traffic management plans, good signage, workable local transport systems that meet our community’s needs.

Requirements for school trips to and from schools. Encourage and incentivise shared transport - discourage and penalise individual school trips.

Suburban traffic trips - Working with National Transport Authority, Louth and Meath County Councils to develop best practice accessibility systems.

## Investment in Drogheda’s Small and Medium Enterprises (SME’s)

### **RSES Objective - A strong economy supported by enterprise and innovation**

It is our view that the SME sector in Drogheda is underinvested. Investment in the development of a strong SME sector requires the following:

- Education / development of Entrepreneurs to start up relevant, scalable businesses in the disruptive technology sector.
- Workspace – this is suitably priced space in which a business can start up, grow and scale.
- Capital – Access to all forms of equity and debt capital
- Suitably trained workforce – a suitable supply of locally based workers.
- Disruptive Technologies – development of relevant, scalable and realistic clusters of tech driven companies.

## **Continued Development of the Boyne Greenway**

### **RSES Objectives – Tourism Development Infrastructure /Healthy Living and Well Being / Sustainable Local Transport**

For the past 8 years a subgroup of the LOVEDROGHEDA BID working group, Boyneside Trail Committee, have been involved in the promotion of a greenway from the Maiden Tower at Mornington to the Bru na Boinne interpretation centre at Newgrange.

Since 2010 lots of good progress has been made on this project.

The development of the Boyne Greenway needs to be included in this strategy. This will be a key piece of tourism development to allow for the development of a strong local tourism economy. We also require this scheme to be connected to the East Coast Greenway from Donabate, Co Dublin and extended along the Boyne to Slane, Navan and Trim in Co Meath to connect with the Royal Canal at Kinnegad and the canal route back to Dublin. This will lead to the development of a greenway triangle with the Boyne Valley at its centre.

## **Water Resources – Drogheda City Urban Area**

### **RSES Objectives – Sustainable Settlement Patterns / Sustainable Management of Water**

Significant ongoing investment is required on the development of Drogheda's Drinking water and Waste Water systems. Recent incidents have highlighted the serious lack of investment in water infrastructure in the region.

This investment will need to be made either through central government or on the user/polluter pays principle. Either way this investment is urgently required.

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