

Mr. Jim Conway,
Director,
Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly,
3rd Floor North,
Ballymun Civic Centre,
Main Street,
Ballymun,
Dublin, D09 C8P5.

23rd January 2019

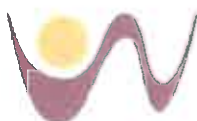
Dear Mr. Conway,

Wexford County Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Eastern and Midlands Regional Authority (EMRA) – *Draft Regional and Spatial Economic Strategy*. The Strategy has the potential to progress spatial and economic relationships with County Wexford and Rosslare Europort to the benefit of both areas.

It is considered that the distinction which was created by the construction of the revised Regional Assembly boundaries has resulted in an artificial disconnect between County Wexford and the EMRA and in particular ignores the functional, spatial and economic relationships and dependencies between County Wexford, County Wicklow and Dublin.

The dependencies are referred to in Figure 1.1 Urban Structure (Defining Urban Structure, CSO 2016) of the RSES which identifies a significant amount of commuting from County Wexford and in Section 3.2 where Wexford is referred to as part of the 'Hinterland' (and not part of the Outer Area, which is within RSES boundary). While such patterns of commuting are not considered sustainable or desirable they will continue without the inclusion of appropriate and consistent policies within both RSES. Such relationships must be planned for in the RSES of both Regions to ensure that a 'business as usual' model does not continue.

Wexford County Council request that the Belfast-Dublin should be expanded to include a corridor through County Wicklow to Rosslare Europort. This Eastern Economic Corridor (part of UNECE Route E01) should be planned as a sustainable transport and economic corridor. While this Corridor is an important Corridor in its own right, it is even more prudent in the context of the uncertainty of trading relations between Dublin and Belfast. The Corridor is referenced throughout the Draft RSES for the Southern Region.



Improved access and functional relationships between Dublin/EMRA and Rosslare Europort has the potential to relieve congestion in Dublin (both with regard land and environmental pressures at the port and transport pressures in the wider region). It also offers the opportunity for a transition from road to rail for freight transport.

Wexford County Council respectfully request that the Eastern Economic Corridor is referenced in the Growth Strategy/Growth Enablers/Collaboration (3.2) Settlement Strategy (4.2), The Region's Economic Drivers (6.4), Trade (6.6) and Transport Strategy (8.2). The Corridor should be supported by strong objectives which commit to the development on the Corridor of clusters of employment and smart specialisms using a shared, educated workforce which would be facilitated by the provision of an efficient, sustainable transport system.

Finally it is considered that there may be some confusion created by including reference to Wexford in the 'Hinterland' (Section 3.2) area as 'Hinterland' is used in other sections to define policies and objectives of the RSES.



Diarmuid Houston

Senior Planner



