

## Heather Cooke

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**From:** Paul McCabe <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 23 January 2019 16:50  
**To:** RSES  
**Subject:** Submission of Thomas Byrne TD (Meath East)

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Please see below the submission of Deputy Thomas Byrne TD.

It is vital that the RSES take cognisance of the growing population of county Meath and consequential need for enhanced services to the citizens of the county.

I cautiously welcome the news that county Meath has seen a population increase of 5.9% since 2011. I encourage and implore the Government to reflect this increase in population with an increase of local services such as housing, schools, health care and recreational facilities. The increase of 5.9% is one of largest increases of population in the country. Our population now stands at almost 195,000, which is an increase of 10,807 people living in county Meath.

It is imperative that investment is delivered to every corner of the county for essential services. The largest increase within the county was in the Kilbrew area, which encompasses the north side of Ashbourne town. Other areas which have experienced significant growth are Cople/Beamore/Mornington. I was note that areas in North Meath have also shown an increase in population, which is contrary to other recent trends. Vital services such as schools and hospital, good quality transport infrastructure and broadband in rural areas need to go hand and hand with these increases in population.

We must prioritise the provision of houses in county Meath to reflect the housing crisis that exists throughout the country.

We must also recognise the need that exists for playing pitches and recreational facilities throughout the county. Both the local authority in tandem with Department of, Environment, Community, Local Government, must development a plan for the provision of playing pitches and park space across the county. We must also prioritise educational facilities and take cognisance of the growing populations in Meath towns, in particular the South Meath towns.

It's important that any future development across county Meath is backed up with adequate services for the local community and that they consent to this. People do not want a return to the past where developments were constructed without the necessary support services being put in place in advance.

I would encourage the Department and the Council to engage and practically assist (where necessary) the Small to Medium industries that exist throughout the County. These local businesses and industries have contributed in no small way to the economic recovery in the region. It is imperative that the Council deliver a plan that keeps local businesses in towns and villages. The local authority could investigate the car parking charges that are currently enforced in towns throughout the county. Perhaps local shopping initiatives could be assisted and promoted by the Council. Any plan must also continue the trend of attracting Foreign Direct Investment into the county. I would like to commend all involved for their proactive role in securing FDI to our region in recent years such as SHIRE and FACEBOOK.

The RSES must support and assist the local communities that have investing so much in the local tourism products throughout the county. I believe that we not making the most of our heritage sites. The Council must

get 'hands on' with communities in offering assistance and advice as to how best improve the tourism experiences at our heritage sites.

A balance must be achieved between ~~protecting and sustaining~~ our built and natural heritage but also recognising that communities must grow and develop. A specific plan must be adopted to deal with residents and their families who live in the Bru na Boinne area and who wish to continue to live this very historic area that they are afforded an equal opportunity.

The RSES in conjunction with the Council need to deliver a major examination, in respect of the N2 road because of ongoing safety issues and continued inadequacies. The general effectiveness of the road as a national route must be investigated.

We must also recognise that the extension of the train line must be delivered to Navan. As you will be aware there had been a proposal under the Transport 21 programme to reopen the Navan rail line from the existing M3 Parkway Station to Navan. However, this project was deferred due to the reduction in the capital investment programme. The proposed extension consisted of 34km of railway line with stations located at Dunshaughlin, Kilmessan, Navan town centre and a further station on the northern edge of Navan. This project was costed in a 2011 feasibility study at €332 million. The project is absolutely crucial to be progressed if we are serious about rail in this country. In relation to the Navan rail line, I wish to point out that any proposed station in the Dunshaughlin area must be located within a short walking distance of the town. The NTA should also not rule out the extended train line serving the large town of Ratoath before making its way to Dunshaughlin and on to Navan. While I am calling for the reinstatement of the Navan rail line, many Kells residents feel that when and if Navan is being constructed, it would be cost effective and beneficial to extend to Kells. I agree with them.

I also wish to emphasise the importance of Gormanston station in serving East Meath. It has effectively been downgraded over the years due to high fares and reduced services. It should immediately be placed in the Dublin short hop commuter zone. Recently, Sallins and Naas and Kilcock were put into the short hop zone and it is completely unfair to Gormanston that, while it is similarly distanced from Dublin, it has vastly higher fares. Please also note that Gormanston serves the commuter town of Stamullen, which Meath County Council wishes to expand dramatically.

I wish you the best of luck in forming the RSES.

Yours,

Deputy Thomas Byrne TD

*Thomas Byrne's Office,*

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