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Message Body:

I want to broadly welcome the publication of the draft RSES and this opportunity to observe on it. I see it as an effective attempt to make the 2040 National Framework happen at the regional level taking account of the need for radical changes in our settlement strategies , recognising the need, for a host of reasons, for a coherent work-live continuum , aiming for the effective implementation of core strategy through compact growth models, fully acknowledging the fact that our town centres are the repository of our heritage, our stories and our local identities.

I see the full realisation of these objectives as meeting many of the acute challenges we face, as we seek to re imagine what our towns new functions will be and unwind the dreadful impacts that developer led planning has imposed on communities and the environment over the last three decades.

However, I am concerned at the lack of coherence between the new National Development Plan and the NPF 2040. The NDP as currently structured and targeted, cannot deliver on the NPF objectives for example in the area of transport.

I would argue that the now obligatory and very rapid Low Carbon Transition, will require a very low cost mass electrically powered public transport system linking regional growth centers to all lower tier settlements. And the Regional Strategies including this EMRA one, need to plan for this.

Regarding my home town of Dundalk.

I want to commend the Assembly for the quality of the work and the detail of the recommendations which I support strongly.

I would urge that the Final version of the Strategy is not deflected by other submissions asking for old plans,for instance the 2006 Dundalk Urban Framework Plan be integrated into it. The 2006 plan is far to expansive and will take investment and focus off the old town, which I cannot stress enough , is the crucible of our local history, our built heritage, our social capital and our identity. It confers meaning on our lives in a way that an out of town centre development cannot hope to, and for that reason demands respect, a lasar like focus and properly considered and substantial investment.

Dundalk's new UAP needs to be informed by the inspired vision for the town of this RSES, and not a document that was assembled at the height of the last boom when, lets face it, developers had an overbearing influence on development outcomes, and to hell with sustainability.

I believe light rail ought to be considered for all regional growth centres and that such a link between the southern rim of Dundalk which includes the Institute of Technology and a large number of high value industries in Finnabair would solve a lot of transport and climate challenges locally and would immeasurably strengthen the chances of realising the development vision you have for the rebirth of the Town Centre.

Allied to that I have been of the veiw for years that we need another route under the mainline rail track at a mid point between the Carrick Road Bridge which goes over the railtrack and the Castletown Road which goes under. The population to the west of the town, which is the only housing growth centre in our Core Strategy must cross or go under the rail line to get to the centre of town and neither route orients the commuter to the centre but rather catapults traffic to the rim of the town.

An exploration of this suggestion is worth at least a desktop analysis.

The requirement for a proper Coastal Zone Management Strategy underpinning any coastal development which appears in both the Draft and the accompanying Environmental Assessment document is to be welcomed. It must be hoped that the Coastal Zone Management Plan will be delivered as a companion piece to the Urban Area Plan.

Could I also make a pitch for the electrification of the above referenced railway line . It should not cease at Drogheda but should continue to Belfast. It would if I understand correctly, improve frequencies and potentially make the opening of a station at Dunleer or Drogheda North more feasible. If works are needed at Connolly Dublin to allow for higher frequency mainline rail they should be expressly identified as an objective.

In regard to climate change, I think the opportunity is now there the Regional Assembly to critically review the climate change proofing and provisions within the RSES and to up the emphasis on CO2/ GHG reductions in every aspect of the proposed plan.

I would argue that Government is going through a step change in its attitude to meeting 2030 targets and that this signal was not available to the Regional Assembly during the drafting of the current draft plan.

In terms of land use, agricultural emissions , forestry and energy generation, settlement patterns and transport investment, the plan can and should be more ambitious, all with a view to the Eastern and Midlands Region exceeding its emissions targets for 2030. I would urge the Assembly to revisit and rework the provisions that can most effectively contribute to this goal.

Finally, regarding the regional hospital for the Louth Meath Cavan Monaghan area, I think the assumption Navan is the optimal location based on an analysis done ten years or more ago requires a reassessment.

Yours,
Cllr. Mark Dearey.
Louth County Council.

This e-mail was sent from a submission form on Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly (<http://emra.ie>)