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**AGENCY OF
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RSES Submission

**Response to Draft Plan
23rd January 2019**

Prepared by: Shona McManus MBA, CEO Owner

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About Osborne

Osborne are an Irish owned Multi Award winning recruitment company operating since 1996. With 6 operations across Ireland and Canada we have a permanent employment headcount of 45+ employees and 170 temporary staff. We have specialist market knowledge in Accountancy & Finance, Office Support, Technical and Engineering, IT and Executive Appointments. With a forecasted turnover in excess of €10 million for 2019, one of our largest operations sits in Drogheda servicing the M1 Corridor which has most recently been zoned as an Eastern Economic Corridor with Drogheda being a focus for development under the 2040 National Plan.

Submission

Our Drogheda operation opened in 2015 an area of strategic importance and potential growth given the locations of Drogheda, the infrastructure and resources, the population and hence the skills and talent pool. Over this time we have grown from an office of 2 to one with 18 full time employees as well as housing crucial internal shared service functions including the office of our CEO.

Since opening our Drogheda office, Osborne have worked on over 2,100 vacancies / jobs in the local area and we have interviewed and supported over 7,400 candidates and job seekers for these roles in the area. Additionally, we have entertained and presented too individuals and organisations from all over the world who were seeking to make Drogheda and the surrounding areas their home, both professionally and personally along with business and FDI's who are seeking the right location to set up their new business operations across multiple sectors.

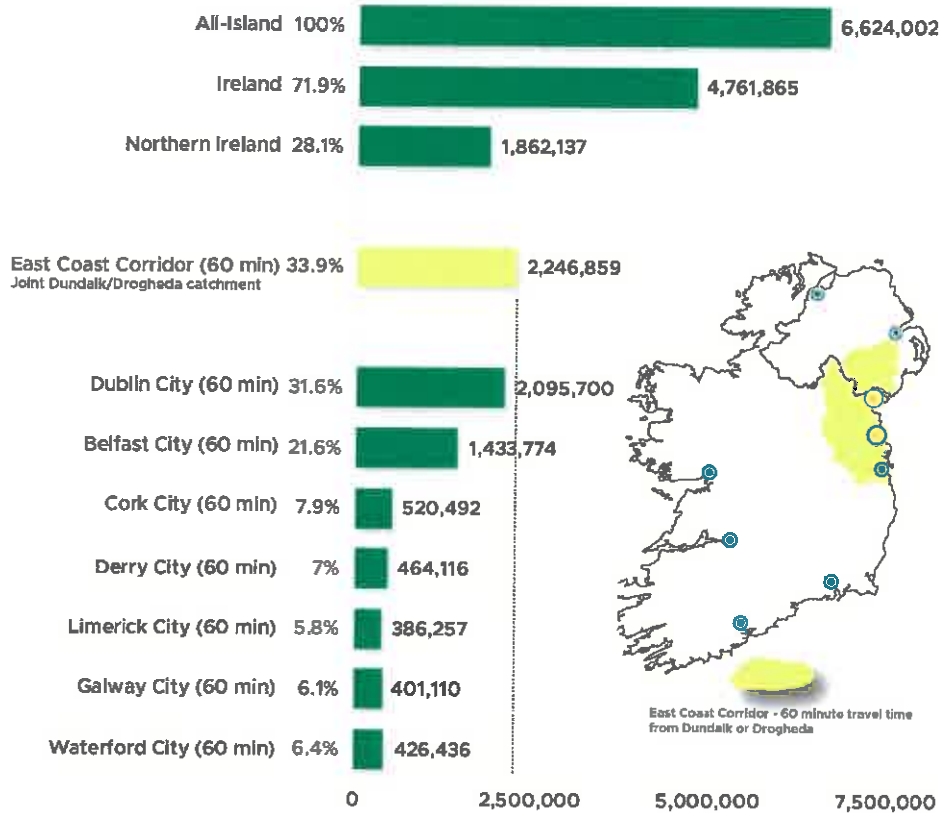
This hands on experience along with our ability to compare and contrast business areas and demographics through our multiple operations, experience in all things jobs, talent and economic development related along with specialist market knowledge and our experience

enables us to credibly put forward a submission on the RSES, sharing with you the ramifications current policy has on doing business in Drogheda.

On page 48 of the draft plan it states a ***forecasted Drogheda population of 50,000 in 2031.*** ***We strongly argue that this is incorrect*** “The vision provided for in the draft RSES is that Drogheda will act as a Regional Growth Centre with a population target in the region of 50,000 by 2031”. Largest and fastest growing towns – CSO Press Release May 2017 stated *“Drogheda, with a population of 40,956 (up 6.2% since April 2011) remained the largest town in Ireland. Swords (39,248) and Dundalk (39,004) complete the top three. Ennis (25,276 persons) remained the largest town in Munster. Sligo with 19,199 persons was Connacht's largest town, while Letterkenny (19,274 persons) was the largest town in the three Ulster counties. The latter three towns experienced a slight decline in population since April 2011”.*

[\(http://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2017pressreleases/pressstatementcensus2016resultsprofile2-populationdistributionandmovements/](http://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2017pressreleases/pressstatementcensus2016resultsprofile2-populationdistributionandmovements/)

East-Coast Corridor: Catchment Profile - Total Population, 2016



The most pressing challenge is that of limitations caused by jurisdiction, as we know Drogheda straddles both Louth and Meath, yet this dual representation sees the town diluted in its importance rather than multiplied. We have some of the best, most accessible facilities for new business, both start up and FDI in the hinterland, yet because it is on the wrong side of an eminently movable man made border, prospective tenants are not eligible for the same supports as they are when they find themselves in Louth- thought these two sites might be less than 200ms away from each other. Osborne have spoken with clients seeking to put down a footprint in Drogheda yet have been frustrated by this bureaucratic hurdle. The benefits of choosing Drogheda as a hub are legion, this region offers accessibility in terms of logistics, is infrastructurally first class, offers a balance of life which is comparable to anywhere in Europe, yet because of local politics is hampering itself in

facilitating business to make Drogheda its home. Page 6 of the RSES states that it should include Local governance operation strategy. The planning and economic strategies will not be achievable if the current ad-hoc local governance is intended to deliver them, especially in situations like Drogheda crossing county boundaries.

Page 31 defines the requirement for cross boundary collaboration and the requirement for Joint Urban area plans for towns like Drogheda. Drogheda's ability to flourish has been seriously hampered by the lack of such a plan and therefore there should be some time limit placed on this requirement.

This lack of joined up thinking in planning has also led to diluting the attraction of region by equally emphasising Drogheda and Dundalk in terms of regional development. We strongly feel that while Dundalk is an exceptional location for business, by supporting Drogheda in becoming THE regional hub, all prospective benefits of this joint strategy would be better achieved than by splitting the emphasis of both. By setting Drogheda as the regional centre, it gives all appropriate agencies, both public and private, a focus, a single story to tell and support without prejudice or being constrained by having a similar region to champion, especially one within a 20 minute commute. Dundalk can in turn be positioned as an auxiliary hub to both Drogheda and Belfast.

We feel the interest of the entire North east region would be best served by establishing Drogheda as the central hub with the appropriate state and local bodies set up accordingly. A single local authority to cover Drogheda, not solely Louth, but by representing those who call Drogheda home but live on the Meath side of the borough boundary too. Many of our clients who live and work in Drogheda feel disenfranchised due to this anomaly. These single authority would in turn work with the requisite state authorities whose remit would include the entirety of Drogheda, rather than seeing Drogheda pursuant to two masters, both of whom are hamstrung by this border. We are extremely confident that by having Drogheda served by the state agencies as a single entity rather than in competition in terms of Job Attraction and Economic development (IDA & EI), training and education (Department of Jobs), housing all goals and benefits forecast for the region under the 2040 plan will be realised much sooner.

For further information and more detailed discussions in relation to our submission please contact us on 01 6384400 or 041 9865058

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