

M1 CORRIDOR BACKGROUND

The removal of Dundalk as a Gateway in the Draft 2040 Development Plan came as a shock to Dundalk. The new criteria of 50,000 population meant Dundalk fell short; **Anthony Abbott King** the senior planner in Louth CC briefed relevant organisations and outlined their response, including **Paddy Malone** Dundalk Chamber. Louth CC proposal was The Linear City of Drogheda Dundalk corridor is considered as a single conurbation thereby comfortably meeting the population threshold.

Paddy reviewed the Draft Plan and recommended that the Chamber follow Louth CC, but extending the Corridor to include Newry. The submission Dundalk Chamber made addressed

1. The competitive advantages of the Drogheda Dundalk Newry corridor
2. The threat of Brexit
3. The All Island perspective.
4. The relative poor contribution by IDA in the region, both in numbers and average payroll cost.

MINISTER MURPHY

Paddy met Minister Murphy at BREXIT conference in Dublin Castle where he explained the Chamber's deep disappointment at both losing its status and the unwillingness of Dublin to consider the Drogheda/Dundalk model.

He undertook to visit Dundalk when he returned from Far East. He contacted Paddy within that time frame and met with two others Rodd Bond, architect who specializes in spatial studies and Pat McCormick, President Dundalk Chamber and head of DKIT Engineering Department.

Minister Murphy was very attentive to our submission and extended the meeting from 30 minutes to over 90.

This highlighted that the North East IDA Region in 2013 had the lowest level of jobs relatively of any region and the lowest level of pay. The area did have a large number of successful indigenous companies in the energy, food and engineering industries as a counterbalance.

The area was still playing catch up from the troubles.

The Chamber emphasized that its focus was to support the Louth CC proposal of Drogheda Dundalk as a linear city but also to expand it to include Newry.

The Minister indicated that if our submission was along those lines he would support it.

RESULT

The 2040 Plan as he announced in November 2017 responded to our submission in full. The Chamber noted the focus on the M1 Corridor to Newry, the additional work on the All Island economy and the section on Brexit. He had taken on board all of what we and Louth CC had said (Please note that Drogheda Chamber had submitted a document re Drogheda city only).

Both Louth CC and Dundalk Chamber had been proven correct both in their analysis and in presentation. What was most pleasing was that the Plan recognized the strategic importance of the M1 corridor. All Dundalk Chamber statements and lobbying, e.g. Budget 2019, have been fully supportive of the 2040 Plan.

BACKGROUND

Paddy had written, along with Newry Chamber and Warrenpoint Chamber a submission to the Oireachtas All Island Committee in 2015 and had made oral submissions before that committee. This report highlighted the positive advantages of the area but also the significant deprivation levels in parts of Dundalk and Newry. These deprivation issues had been highlighted in a major study initiated by Dundalk Chamber and Louth CC together with Newry Chamber and Newry Mourne Council. The report was written by the economist Pat McArdle. A similar report in 2014 by the Department of the Environment using 2011 data shows that Dundalk and Letterkenny were the worst two performing Gateway towns. The position since 2014 has improved based on available evidence

Louth Economic Forum had endorsed the Louth Payments Corridor. The new concept Paddy had was to highlight the advantages of the area to a wider range of industry but in particular to target

1. UK tier 2 companies who need EU passport and/or those supporting companies within the IFSC. Such companies, based on UK (The City) experience do not need to be physically in The City or IFSC but must be accessible to it, both physically and via broadband. The rail and bus link from Dundalk to IFSC is 60 minutes and for Drogheda 40

2. FDI, Foreign Direct Investment companies who wish to come to Ireland and be close to Dublin/Belfast but not paying Dublin costs, be they property or payroll

3. Existing businesses, be they FDI or Indigenous who need to expand. Those in Dublin face steep costs whereas within 20-35 minutes of the Airport there are the towns of Drogheda and Dundalk with all they have to offer.
 - a. Three airports within an hour (Dublin to Dundalk 36 minutes and Drogheda 21)
 - b. Four deep-water ports, including Warrenpoint
 - c. 1gb broadband speeds, faster than IFSC
 - d. Louth has highest broadband coverage in the country
 - e. 7 universities within commuting time plus DKIT
 - f. 2,300,000 WITHIN 60 MINUTES OF Dundalk/Drogheda (see schedule for comparative figures)
 - g. 80,000 graduates currently travelling into Dublin some of whom have indicated that they would prefer not to commute to Dublin.

EMRA PLAN

The proposal is in line with the Draft Eastern Midland Regional Plan as announced in November 2017 and the thinking of Louth CC. Paddy has discussed the Plan with Anthony Abbott King to ensure that the proposal is in sync with the Draft Plan