

Border counties and the National Planning Framework



An economic development perspective from a Border county



Friday, 10th March 2017

Monaghan, a Border Location

Strategically located – appears proximate to the cities - Dublin, Belfast, Derry and to airports and ports

County pop. 60,483

Monaghan Town & environs pop. 7,452

Municipal District pop. 20,500 (Census 2011)

Dispersed rural population between 5 towns, villages and rural areas



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Background & Context to Border Towns

Tradition of small farm holdings and poorer quality soils has led to diversification



Agri-food –
70% of country's poultry production
15 of the top 100 food companies in Ireland have a presence in Monaghan



castlecool

Tradition of engineering – spin-offs, start-ups in farm sheds while sustaining small holdings and elderly parents



This sustains our Border areas and presents our challenges

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Challenges

Town population growth

Education / graduate retention

Infrastructure and connectivity

Environmental

Future funding



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Building critical mass in our Towns

Competition to sustain 5 towns in the county

Under investment as NSS 'Hub' – need for effective designation in the NPF

No decentralisation of government departments, no hospital, no third level

Investment in towns through public investment and social enterprise model for affordable incubation space

Need to focus on attractive locations to live in and entice investment



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Role and function of rural towns

Monaghan: employment/retail/administrative

Historical character, strategic location between Belfast, Dublin and the NW, quality and choice of secondary schools, quality of life, variety of non-branded retail outlets, car parking, amenity, friendly, night life



What's missing? – youth population, highly skilled graduate job opportunities, health care, third level education, large scale private investment, range of services, bed night space, connectivity

Town Centre Health Check 'pilot' in 10 towns
Heritage Council initiative – collaborative programme with LAs, Town Teams, Third level - identified need for centralised resource to achieve '*Economies of scale/economies of repetition*' to address decline in our towns



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Role and function of rural towns

Urban Regeneration – to breathe life back into the towns (existing infrastructure, roads, water, heritage, amenities, shopping, services and communities) **IT MAKES SENSE - ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL** and there is **CAPACITY IN OUR TOWNS**

Need for the Local Authority to lead/intervene
Renewal – change in use patterns of town centres – less traditional retail, more social activity?



Consolidate and redefine our town centres to incorporate more living:

- investigate models for this (back lands, narrow plot widths)
- accommodate ageing population / families
- support to Councils for land assembly and funding

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Education / Graduate retention

High quality secondary education and third level attainment but lowest graduate retention in the country

Graduate population replaced by non-nationals (29% Monaghan Town)

Need to broaden our employment base e.g. IT, become a remote service location

Local Economic and Community Plan:

Top 50 Companies Skills Survey 2015 –collaboration with LA /ETB / employers: Apprenticeship programmes

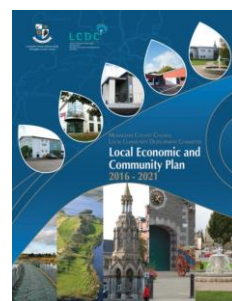
Third level: research and development

- Developing outreach from DkIT

To compete internationally: Focus on innovation in agri-food, engineering, building on our success and supplement this with strategic town investment locations

Branding campaign 2016 – focus on quality of life (attract thirty somethings)

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Infrastructure and Connectivity

Dispersed industrial landscape and high volume production



We need to be connected to markets: Telecommunications / Transport / Electricity / Gas

Rollout of rural broadband plan is critical to survival and expansion / need for competition between providers



North/South Interconnector – certainty of electricity supply

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Infrastructure and Connectivity



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Infrastructure and Connectivity

Towns that are well connected to cities and the larger towns have flourished

Town pop.	1961	2011	% change
Monaghan	4,013	7,452	86%
Navan	3,998	28,559	714%
Mullingar	5,894	20,103	341%

Roads infrastructure N2/A5 upgrade is critical (connecting the North West)



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Infrastructure and Connectivity

Gas – rollout to the North West

Opportunity to take advantage of Project Kelvin, land availability, water infrastructure, quality of life

An urban based focus on 2nd tier cities will increase the disparity between the North West and the rest of the country



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Environmental

Carbon footprint type of industry

Leadership in the development of innovative expertise between industry and third level
e.g. Monaghan Mushrooms leading the way with Vitamin D mushroom

Balancing carbon footprint locally:

- ✓ Greenway model – sustainable transport and biodiversity
- ✓ Sliabh Beagh – cross-border strategic conservation management
- ✓ Environmental and tourism benefits

‘Balanced Local Development’



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Future Funding

Resilient Border communities - currency differential resulted in cautious business investments

BREXIT – unprecedented uncertainty – 600+ pieces of legislation for UK to look at competitive advantage

EU funding: e.g. INTERREG, Horizon 2020, PEACE

- infrastructure
- innovation
- N/S cross-border cooperation

What will UK priorities be after BREXIT – commitment to EU2020/30 targets and a spirit for cooperation?

Commitment of local authorities on cross-border basis: encouragement through funding for stability in the Border Region



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Concluding remarks

Poor levels of infrastructure leaves us **Distant** from cities
 Monaghan situation applicable to other Border towns –
 Cavan, Enniskillen, Carrick-on-Shannon, Omagh
 Our Border towns have capacity for growth
 ‘Can do’ – Resilient /entrepreneurial/work ethic



Key Priorities to reverse the decline of our rural towns:

- ✓ High quality infrastructure to make our Border towns accessible to large towns and cities
- ✓ Renewal of our town centres (Place-making)
- ✓ Effective ‘hub’ status for our County Towns
- ✓ Serviced industrial lands to attract outward investment
- ✓ Focus on innovation and supports in our traditional sectors to compete globally
- ✓ Environmental protection to promote our clean rural environment (tourism potential)



Appropriate funding mechanisms particularly for the survival
 of our County Towns

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....compounding the disadvantages for the Border region

An ask of the North South Ministerial Council:

A Border Counties/Towns forum to promote the mutual economic, social and environmental well-being of the Border Region

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Thank you



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