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Re Submission to Louth County Development Plan

22nd Dec 2020

To whom it may concern

We represent parents who are campaigning for their children to have the option to be educated through Irish.

The draft plan does not have any policies associated with the promotion of the use of Irish. This needs to be addressed.

Louth County Council should consider the importance of policies that promote the Irish language to the county and give it due consideration when reviewing the draft plan, and include policies and actions that are supportive to the development of the language from 2021-2027.

We request that the following be included in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027.

1. Co. Louth Irish Language Plan
Develop an Irish Language County Plan in conjunction with various agencies and organisations across the county, in line with the National 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030
2. Provision of Irish medium education in the county with planning for Naíonraí, Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcholáistí in Louth within the lifetime of this plan.

Louth currently has one of the lowest rates of provision of Irish medium education at both primary and secondary level in the country and is the lowest in Leinster.

The draft plan indicates that the populations of both Dundalk and Drogheda are projected to grow to c. >50,000. This demographic increase will require additional school facilities at primary and secondary level. We would urge Louth Co Council that they promote that these additional schools be Irish medium schools.

The provision of two additional 500 pupil gaelscoileanna would bring the percentage of Irish medium primary school places available in Louth to near the national average of 8%.

The provision of two new 400 pupil gaelcholáistí in Dundalk and Drogheda would bring the percentage of Irish medium post-primary school places available in Louth to just over the national average of 4%. It should be noted that this figure is targeted to double nationally to 8% by 2030 and so even with the provision of these gaelcholáistí, Louth would still be below the national average.

We are currently involved with An Foras Pátrúnachta to establish a satellite of a Co. Dublin gaelcholáiste (Coláiste Ghlór na Mara, Balbriggan) in Dundalk. We are planning to open this school in September 2021 and this will become the nucleus of a new gaelcholáiste that we are planning to eventually open in Dundalk.

We have been advised by naíonraí that there is a 100%+ over subscription for available places in 2019-2020.

The Louth Development Plan should prioritise the planning for additional naíonraí in areas where population centres are set to increase as a result of new residential development and to include this as a stated policy objective in the Development Plan.

In addition to this, planning should be started for the provision of Irish medium education from Naíonraí level in **the north of the county to support Louth County Council's aim to promote and protect the language and heritage from the Oriel region.**

Yours

Aidan Kinsella

Ard Runaí – Gaelcholáiste do Contae Lú