

Louth Draft County Development Plan (CDP)



December 23rd 2020

Submission:

The Mill Enterprise Hub

Newtown Link Road, Drogheda, Co. Louth
041-9802444



With support from:

- Drogheda & District Chamber of Commerce
- Love Drogheda Business Improvement District (BIDS)
- Drogheda City Status Group

Contents

DROGHEDA – SUBMISSION RESPONDING TO THE 2021-2027 LOUTH DRAFT CDP	3
Introduction / A Vision for Drogheda	4
Working towards a vibrant buzzy enterprising city:	5
Cross boundary statutory Joint Urban Area Plan (UAP)	5
Commuter survey from June 2020	7
Purpose of this submission	11
Stakeholders:	11
Summary of Submission:	12
Economic Background – National & Regional Policies:	15
Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) RSES:	15
Project Ireland 2040 – key points:	15
Land- Zoning.....	16
Detailed Submission – Chapter by Chapter Inputs:	18
Drogheda, a 2018/2019 European Top 10 Micro-City	23
Appendix A: Action plan for jobs – Future Jobs Ireland 2019.....	24
Appendix B: Project Ireland 2040:	25
Appendix C: NPF City and Town Population Growth Comparisons	26
Appendix D: Population:	27
CSO 2020 House Building Figures – Drogheda has highest New Dwellings.....	27
Housing Completions for three years, 2016-2018.....	27
Appendix E: Summary of ‘Embrace The Change’ data collected by The Mill, Drogheda Chamber, and Love Drogheda BIDS (March 2020). Analysis of 2016 Census Commuter figures.	28



DROGHEDA

The place to invest, work, live, play and stay

#INVESTDROGHEDA

Introduction / A Vision for Drogheda

Drogheda is one of the oldest and most historic towns in Ireland. Passing through its ancient gates a history emerges of sacred sites, battlegrounds, cultural icons and its industrial superiority of times past. Drogheda has always adapted and innovated with changing times. On its doorstep, the Brú na Bóinne UNESCO World Heritage Site boasts the world's first clock dating back over 5000 years. Innovation and creativity are in the fabric of Ireland's largest town. Today, Drogheda boasts a large highly educated and talented workforce, multiple surrounding third level education options, an unrivalled access and infrastructure offering including Ireland's fastest broadband.

As a Destination Town for tourism and the Gateway to Ireland's Ancient East, Drogheda is a great location to work, rest, play and stay.

It is no surprise that Drogheda was internationally ranked as one of Europe's top 10 emerging micro cities in 2018/2019 by the Financial Times.

The Ireland 2040 Plan and the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly's RSES report have identified Drogheda as one of five Regional Growth Centre that should be a Focal Point for Employment

Over the past twenty years, Drogheda has rapidly expanded and is now the largest and fastest growing town in Ireland, according to Census 2016. The recent focus on Climate change and new remote working options have highlighted the need to reduce the carbon footprint of the 15,000 commuters currently leaving the Drogheda region every day (see <https://www.droghedachamber.ie/drogheda-embrace-the-change> for Commuter data commissioned in February 2020).

15,000 Skilled Commuters leave Drogheda for work each day.



**“Great Startup location.
Ireland’s largest and
fastest growing town.
Enable commuting
employees to
work locally.”**

Employers. Rethink your location.

DROGHEDA.
Embrace the Change.

FIND OUT HOW >

The population is continuing to expand rapidly on both the Louth and Meath districts of Drogheda, as indicated by the CSO Q2 statistics which showed that the A92/Drogheda region had the most 'New Builds' (outside of Dublin) completed in the period. This highlights the need to manage orderly growth, matching services and employment to population growth, but a joint Urban Area Plan is unlikely to be completed by both Councils within the next two years.

Drogheda already has a low 'local jobs to workforce' ratio of 76% , as per draft CDP . The low rate, even within Louth, is a clear indication that more local jobs need to be created and that the CDP could benefit from an extra emphasis on matching the rapid population growth with increased employment opportunities.

The Louth and Meath CDPs predict a population growth of 51,000 by 2027 which is a strong indicator that Drogheda is likely to remain the largest town in Ireland and probably overtake Waterford as fifth largest populated urban district, especially if you consider the wider 15km peripheral zone as part of the Regional Growth Centre status. We firmly believe that there is a massive opportunity to develop ideas to support and create jobs, and that Drogheda can be an ideal location for business and lifestyle.

It should be recognised within the CDP that Drogheda **needs additional support to elevate itself to standards of other nationwide RGCs** (all of whom are past Gateway or 'Linked' Gateways) and contain existing infrastructural advantages, for example , third-level institutes, or regional headquarters of support agencies such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, or the Local Enterprise Office.

Working towards a vibrant buzzy enterprising city:

The success of Fleadh Cheoil na Eireann, which saw 500,000 people enjoying Irish culture and music in Drogheda in 2018 and an estimated 750,000 in 2019 shows what can be achieved when people work together for the same goal. Drogheda has an enviable track record at collective engagement emerging from initiatives such as Local Heroes, Bonanza, The Boyne Greenway and the Drogheda Camino. To continue momentum and create the future for Drogheda, local businesses voted for a 'BIDS' scheme from 2019 to 2024 identifying 26 projects to be implemented over a five year period. The commitment to BIDS by local businesses will help to make Drogheda the number one spot in the North-East for investment, jobs, leisure and entertainment. Projects under the proposal cover Jobs and enterprise, tourism and lifestyle, retail and town centre, and environmental projects.

Cross boundary statutory Joint Urban Area Plan (UAP)

The Urban Area Plan creates the requirement for a regional development zone and an ambitious plan for this should be established asap. The Drogheda Regional Development Zone will plan for medium and long term growth of the regions population and economy.

Section 2.7 of the CDP Plan should include **implementation objectives** relating to the Cross Boundary Statutory Joint Urban Plan (UAP) to ensure the timely preparation of a UAP for Drogheda. The Draft Plan does not do that. The RSES EMRA page 38 under Collaboration requires that 'More effective strategic planning and co-ordination of the future development nationally and regionally strategic locations that straddle inter- or intra-regional boundaries, for example Athlone, Carlow, Drogheda and Dundalk Newry, is required. The Regional Assembly will ensure that joint urban area plans are delivered for the Regional Growth Centres by the relevant local authorities to deliver regional centres of scale.'

The Draft CDP is missing a critical Strategic Objective (“SO”) – i.e. setting out the urgency to work with Meath County Council on addressing all aspects of the future relationship between Drogheda and East Meath in the context of planning for the future of Drogheda as Ireland’s largest town .

Start-up / Enterprise Activity:

Drogheda has earned the reputation as a start-up hub with the launch of its own purpose-built enterprise centre, The Mill Enterprise Hub, in 2014. The Mill currently hosts circa 35 companies and 80 employees, and is recognised as a regional model of excellence.

Some outstanding IDA companies have chosen Drogheda as their preferred location including Yapstone (fintech), Coca-Cola International Services (Food production), Becton Dickenson & Co (MedTech), Amphenol TCS (ICT), State Street IFS (financial services), Kellton Tech (ICT/outsourcing/aviation), Armac Systems (aviation), PCI services (pharma). These firms select Drogheda because of its competitive pricing, availability of talent pool and excellent broadband and transport links. Despite its clear location and resource advantages however, the number of IDA jobs by comparison to other large towns in Ireland remains significantly underrepresented. Many highly educated and talented workers leave Drogheda on a daily basis to work elsewhere and these could be attracted back by the skilled jobs that FDI companies bring. Drogheda is an anomaly among Ireland’s largest towns and regional cities in terms of the daily working population ratios. This will only become more pronounced without a significant governmental emphasis on local job creation consistent with the Project Ireland 2040 objectives.

The draft CDP does not identify suitable zoning that is necessary to encourage FDI investment.



The representative bodies of Drogheda are collaborating strongly and have developed effective working relationships with relevant government departments, organisations and people to reverse the brain drain. Business, community and planning groups are now coming together as a collective

representative voice of Drogheda, meeting with regional IDA representatives in Meath and Louth. This is necessary to ensure FDI is a meaningful part of growth for the town and that the Drogheda offering and brand is coherent and clear to international companies. Drogheda is an investment ready town needing a collective push as a unified development zone. The collaboration and shared responsibilities of government from the Louth and Meath counties is underway, , but needs to be fast-tracked to keep pace with the current population explosion.

An emerging region of this size requires on the ground representation from government enterprise agencies such as LEO, EI, and IDA and representation on the Regional Assembly. A unified brand and vision reflecting the living reality of Drogheda in terms of its population and economy will drive self-sustaining growth planned for under the government's long-term strategy – Drogheda Chamber and The Mill Enterprise Hub are currently creating new marketing material to promote Drogheda.

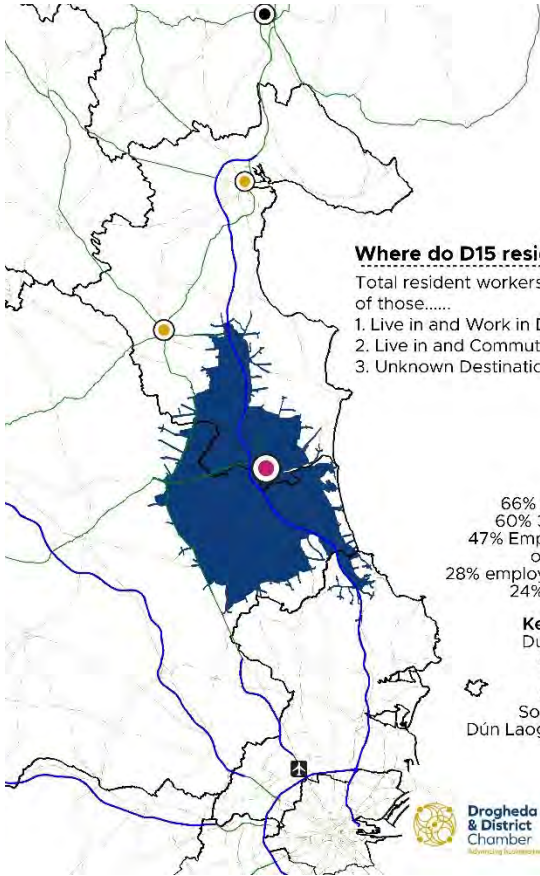
The 2016 census identified Drogheda as the fastest growing town in the Country. This agglomeration of Drogheda-LBM identified as the greater Drogheda area has physically merged over the past decade and these 'points of fusion' continue to experience significant population and demand led housing growth.

Commuter survey from June 2020

The commuter survey (graphics below) and data analysis of the Census 2016 report by The Mill, Drogheda Chamber, and Love Drogheda BIDS clearly highlights the skilled commuters that live in Drogheda but have to commute outside of the region to gain employment.

The Commuter survey results (over 800 respondents) included:

- 55% were dis-satisfied or very dis-satisfied with their current Commute
- 75% are interested or very interested in working locally.
- 50% would take a salary cut to work locally; up to 15% salary cut was the preferred option.
- 48% of respondent were in middle or senior roles (24% Manager or Senior Professional, 24% Professional)
- Strong response from commuter with highly-valued IT skills – 109 respondents had skills in 'Data analytics', with 107 employed in 'mobile tech', and 75 respondents with 'cloud computing' skills.
- The majority were commuting to Dublin City Centre (35%) with another 20% commuting to North Dublin
- 50% drove a car with no passengers to work
- 65% departed for work before 7:30am
- 50% took more than 60 minutes to commute
- 35% spend more than €350 per month commuting
- 6% said they were self-employed. 8 people employed more than 50 ftes.
- 53% of respondents were unaware of local Enterprise hub
- 64% said they could work remotely up to 2 days per week



Drogheda - 15 Minute Catchment Zone (D15)

Key Facts:

- * 35,663 resident workers
- * 21,526 local jobs in D15
- * 42% of resident workers commute out of D15

Where do D15 residents work?

Total resident workers: 35,663 of those.....

1. Live in and Work in D15: 13,847 (39%)
2. Live in and Commute Out: 14,992 (42%)
3. Unknown Destinations: 6,824 (19%)

66% Aged 20-44 Years
60% 3rd Level Educated
47% Employers and Managers or Professionals
28% employed in Retail & Wholesale
24% employed in ICT

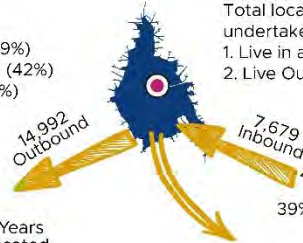
Key Destinations:

- Dublin City (5,152)
- Fingal (4,890)
- Louth (1,592)
- Meath (1,440)
- South Dublin (703)
- Dún Laoghaire Rathdown (457)

Who works in D15?

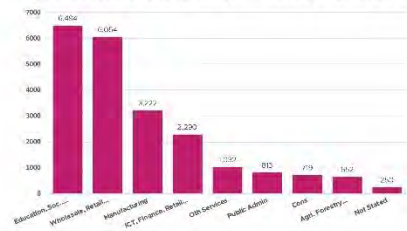
Total local jobs: 21,526 undertaken by.....

1. Live in and Work in D15: 13,847 (64%)
2. Live Out and Commute In: 7,679 (36%)



65% Aged 20-44 Years
54% 3rd Level Educated
42% Employers and Managers or Professionals
39% employed in Retail & Wholesale
18% employed in ICT

Jobs located in D15 (21,526) - Industry Profile, 2016



Contains Irish Public Sector Data (data.gov.ie) licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Developed using GIS. Data Source: Oireachtas, CSO Census 2016. Data analysis: Justin Gleeson.





Drogheda & District Chamber
Advancing business together

Drogheda commuter census analysis and survey - June 2020

50% of Drogheda Commuters would take a salary cut to work locally.

15% Reduction

"I'd gladly take a salary cut to work closer to home and have a better quality of life."

Drogheda Commuters spend on average 1 day a week travelling to work.



"By not travelling I'd have an extra 6 days per month for family, friends and me."

65% of Drogheda Commuters depart for work each day before 7:30am



"I get the 7:30am train to work, and the 6:30pm train home."

64% of Drogheda Commuters said they could work remotely.



"The fiber optic network enables me to work from a co-working space or from my home."

Rethink your commute. Work Local.

DROGHEDA.

Embrace the Change.

[FIND OUT HOW >](#)

35% of Drogheda Commuters spend more than €250pm commuting.



"Travel costs are the part of my salary I never called mine."

Rethink your commute. Work Local.

DROGHEDA.

Embrace the Change.

[FIND OUT HOW >](#)



the mill
Drogheda's Enterprise Hub



Drogheda & District Chamber
Advancing business together

Drogheda commuter census analysis and survey - June 2020

75% of Drogheda Commuters are dissatisfied with their commute.



“Tap into enthusiastic local workforce. Vibrant local business community. Only 30 minutes to Dublin airport and 5 minutes to beach.”

15,000 Skilled Commuters leave Drogheda for work each day.



“Great Startup location. Ireland's largest and fastest growing town. Enable commuting employees to work locally.”

64% of Drogheda Commuters said they could work remotely.



“Drogheda for remote skilled employees. Ideal location for remote working. Close to city, with country lifestyle.”

47% of Drogheda Commuters are Employers/Managers/Professionals.



“Drogheda is the ideal location for 2nd site solution for skilled employees and lower office / housing costs.”

Employers. Rethink your location.

DROGHEDA.
Embrace the Change.

[FIND OUT HOW >](#)

50% of Drogheda Commuters would take a salary cut to work locally.

15%
Reduction

“The opportunity to reduce your company payroll costs. Improve the work/life balance of employees.”

Employers. Rethink your location.

DROGHEDA.
Embrace the Change.

[FIND OUT HOW >](#)

Purpose of this submission .

Drogheda with a population of circa 41,000 as per the CSO Census of 2016, (or 52,828 including its south-eastern suburbs of Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington) **is at a pivotal moment in its development.**

It is now categorised as a self-sustaining regional growth centre within the Project Ireland 2040 plan and the Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019 – 2031 (RSES). It is recognised by Fáilte Ireland as the Destination Town of Louth and the Gateway to Ireland’s Ancient East and the historic Boyne Valley. It is awarded Purple Flag Accreditation for the quality of its night life and it has BIDS Scheme approval since September 2019. Drogheda is Ireland’s largest town and it is internationally recognised as one of Europe’s top 10 emerging cities.

We believe that Drogheda is at a point, where with the right planning and support, it can become one of Ireland’s driving forces in regional economic development and capitalise on it’s ideal location and skilled population to become a vibrant self-sustaining urban region. However, it needs a cohesive plan across Louth and Meath Councils, and within the regional and National framework to make this vision a reality.

Stakeholders:

Drogheda’s business associations have been working closely together over 2019 / 2020 to create and define a shared common economic and civic vision for Drogheda.

The Mill Enterprise Hub, Drogheda & District Chamber of Commerce, and Love Drogheda BIDS have regularly met with Louth and Meath County Council, IDA, and other bodies to ensure that a cohesive approach is maintained. Drogheda City Status Group have also contributed to these plans, and all four organisations are making submissions to the draft CDP that highlight common issues whilst focusing on the specific objectives and remit of each organisation .

Summary of Submission:

This submission showcases Drogheda as the largest and fastest growing town in Ireland that could become a major economic Powerhouse if given the right supports and direction at National, Regional, and Local level.

Drogheda is a designated self-sustaining Regional Growth Centre in the Ireland 2040 plan. The town has a highly skilled and educated young population, many of whom commute daily to Dublin and elsewhere. The focus now is to ensure that local enterprise and employment opportunities match the town's brave vision for the future so that the people of Drogheda can both live and work close to home. Reversing the commute for skilled individuals by supporting indigenous job creation, and via IDA opportunities to attract Foreign Direct Investment will provide sustainable growth for the town and a high value asset for Louth County Council. Plans in RSES to extend the DART to Drogheda further enhances inbound commuter opportunities from coastal suburbs.

Today, The Mill Enterprise Hub is Drogheda's centre for developing new business ideas and enterprise growth with its track record for running innovative national enterprise pilots. Building on the success of The Mill as a nationally recognised model of excellence, plans are underway, lead by Louth County Council, to create a new Drogheda Digital Innovation Hub in the 'Youthreach' building on Narrow West Street. This introduces spaces for sharing new business ideas, innovation and growth across Drogheda's multiple business zones.

Drogheda Port is included as one of only three EU designated 'Motorway of the Sea' core network deep-water ports in Ireland and is eligible to apply for CEF funding (Connecting Europe Facility). The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is a key EU funding instrument to promote growth, jobs and competitiveness through targeted infrastructure investment at the European level. It supports the development of high performing, sustainable and efficiently interconnected trans-European networks in the fields of transport, energy and digital services.

Combine this with value for money and multi sectoral expertise and Drogheda establishes itself as a prime location for high value companies active across a range of sectors. It is a real option for international companies new to Ireland or for established companies making second location investments. Drogheda is very much open for indigenous and FDI business, and companies will find locations and expertise across many sectors including financial and fintech, professional services, global business services, advanced manufacturing, food technology, ICT, aviation, digital technology, health and life sciences, energy, food manufacturing, engineering, green industries, creative industries and tourism related sectors.

We believe the actions proposed in this submission are necessary to create Drogheda's narrative commensurate with its profile as Ireland's largest town and as an important self-sustaining regional growth centre. We summarise our main observations below and have provides a detailed submission in the table

1. Drogheda does **not include enough 'Business & technology' zoning in the current draft CDP** to attract jobs that will entice the 15,000 skilled commuters within 15 minutes of Drogheda M1 park. The circa 20 acres of 'business & technology' zoned land in Drogheda contracts with the 1000 acres of 'business & technology' zoned land in Dundalk. The land that The Mill is on (and adjacent area), could be converted to 'Business & Technology' zoned area as part of a revamp of the 2009 Newtown Enterprise Masterplan.

2. The Cross-Boundary Joint Urban Plan (UAP) is critical if Drogheda is to develop in a cohesive and planned manner. We realise that the UAP can't be commenced until the CDP is complete but believe that relevant research and detailed timeframe of plan can be created that will not hinder the CDP
3. The new **Drogheda Digital Innovation Hub** could be a starting point for town centre 'business & technology' employment, as part of WestGate vision. WestGate vision needs to be updated as it does not include an enterprise/employment section which is now considered essential in 'Town centre first' policies.
4. Draft CDP doesn't ensure that there is land for 'high-value' jobs, **in particular there is no plan for IDA activity and it is not identified as a specific policy** (as per Ardee & Dundalk). Many years of underinvestment in Drogheda by IDA companies needs to be addressed to counteract the reverse commute of our talent. Drogheda should be presented to IDA clients as a '**real alternative to Dublin**' based on location advantages, superior infrastructure and availability of a skilled talent pool – the current draft CDP focuses on our Border / NorthEast designation when we should be looking at our proximity to Dublin as our main selling point, as per recommendations of the Louth Economic Forum's FDI objectives in 2015.
5. Draft CDP doesn't promote Cluster development in Drogheda- In particular, there is an opportunity for Drogheda to develop as a **Fintech Hub** due to The Fintech Corridor (M1 Payments). This new proposed Business and Technology park should incorporate a '**Fintech Corridor Hub/ Building**' HQ to house fintech & payments-related companies that have been, and will be enticed to the M1 region via the IDA and www.thefintechcorridor.com .
6. Enterprise Ireland's submission to Louth plan included the need to **create a Northeast Business Innovation Centre (BIC)**. The plan for DDIH in Youthreach building also highlighted the opportunity to create a Northeast BIC in Drogheda (with The Mill) that would help to attract scalable startups , Clusters, and market Drogheda as an innovative town. We currently don't have a government support agency based in Drogheda – this could help us foster innovation and provide jobs. We request that it is inserted in CDP as an aim of Louth Council.
7. Drogheda Map does not include any '**Research & Innovation**' zoning. It's likely we will be the only RGC without that zoning as the other four have IoTs. The *EMRA strategy* includes locating a campus of DKIT in Drogheda and it was also included in the previous Louth CDP. There is an opportunity to Promote a National Fintech Park in Drogheda that includes a 'Centre of Excellence' as part of The Fintech Corridor. There is also an opportunity to encourage the building of LMETB HQ. The existing planning permission is possibly too small, and a new site or building may need to be proposed. The LMETB HQ could be incorporated in an educational campus alongside a DKIT Centre of Excellence or other specialised centre.

There is no land identified for a **potential IDA Park for FDI** ('business & technology zoning) – This resigns Drogheda to securing a low level of FDI jobs which does not align with EMRA

proposals, or our RGC status as a focal point for employment. There is no plan to develop a large 'business & technology' zone, apart from small plot in Greenhills and the IDA park in Meath that only has 8.5 acres remaining. This is contrary to EMRA plan and Ireland 2040 plan to match employment and population growth as a RGC focal point. **A Business and Technology Park is required in the 'Louth' section of Drogheda.** Louth can offer favourable grants from the BMW region and this allows both counties to leverage benefits, based on their specific offering.

8. The October 2020 report from Regional Assemblies' notes the need to create '**Co-working Hubs of Scale**'. There is an opportunity to work with IDA and EI to create a specially built co-working park or large hub to target FDI and indigenous companies that currently employ 'commuters'.
9. The Greater Drogheda Area currently has some of the highest (and longest) commuter rates in Ireland, combined with some of the most highly-skilled employees in Ireland. Our talent is commuting to Dublin every morning, clogging up motorways, damaging the environment, and wasting energy. This is unsustainable and contradicts the 2040 plan to lower emissions and develop the regions. Indeed, Drogheda is the ideal location to encourage those based in North Dublin to lower their commuting time via a 'reverse commute', ideally on some of the empty buses and trains that have just dropped employees into the city centre. Louth County Council should **target commuters and encourage companies to develop second site solutions** in Drogheda. There is the opportunity to target commuters to encourage and take a lead on communicating Drogheda as a good second location for IDA and large indigenous firms. Representative bodies know that many senior level professionals and experts are among those commuting long distances to work. Drogheda is a viable alternative for FDI spill over across multiple sectors and IDA support is needed to encourage this.
10. Chapter 6 Tourism - Tourism brings direct expenditure into towns, creates employment and is a direct driver of economic activity. Although not directly involved with Tourism, The Mill recognises the economic value it brings to the region, and in particular, how it can improve the branding of Drogheda as a favoured location to live and work. We also completed a feasibility study with Enterprise Ireland in 2020 that looks at how Louth / Meath could develop a cluster based on the Traveltech and Aviation sectors.

Tourism is important to Drogheda in relation to development of town centre and creating a location where investors and residents want to work, live, and play. Drogheda has neither a dedicated Tourism Officer or Heritage Officer for the Greater Drogheda area. Drogheda has an excellent volunteer run museum at Millmount which currently receives no funding from LCC – unlike its counterpart, the County Museum in Dundalk which is fully funded by LCC. There is a massive opportunity to create additional employment due to Drogheda's designation as a 'Destination Town' but it needs dedicated resources.

Economic Background – National & Regional Policies:

The Louth CDP should align with Project Ireland 2040 and the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly Regional Assembly's recommendations included in their spatial plan. The main points of both reports are listed below.

Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) RSES:

(https://emra.ie/dubh/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EMRA_RSES_1.4.5web.pdf)

Summary of key Recommendation of EMRA:

“Drogheda has developed a strong and broad employment base in the range of services and manufacturers it supports, principally in the financial, payment, shared services and food technology sectors. Drogheda shall promote ***further employment growth based on the attractiveness of its assets and the quality of life offering for workers and residents.***

This can include additional employment opportunities, ***including high value jobs, to provide for a greater jobs to residents ratio.***

The establishment of The Mill in Drogheda hosting numerous start-up companies highlights the existing pool of entrepreneurial talent present that will continue to be supported and developed.

There is opportunity for **Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT) to continue to develop as a centre for excellence for education with a Drogheda campus.**

There is also potential with the Drogheda Institute of Further Education (**DIFE**), enhancing the educational offer in the north east.

The **retention of indigenous talent can be achieved by providing appropriate and career advancing employment opportunities locally or in sustainable urban centres of scale** within the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor accessible by public transport.

Support the **sustainable development of existing zoned lands in the northern and southern environs of the town with a particular emphasis on the promotion of the IDA Business Park as a location for economic investment** and the creation of compact, residential communities in key locations in proximity to established residential areas and transport hubs. “

Project Ireland 2040 – key points:

“The regional roles of Athlone in the Midlands, Sligo and Letterkenny in the North-West and the Letterkenny-Derry and Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross-border networks will be identified and supported in the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy”

“Building Stronger Regions: Accessible Centres of Scale: “Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy to set out a strategic development framework for the Region, leading with the key role of Athlone in the Midlands and the Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross-border network”

“It will be necessary to **prepare co-ordinated strategies for Dundalk and Drogheda at both regional and town level to ensure that they have the capacity to grow sustainably and secure investment** as key centres on the Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross-border network. (P36)”

“A focused approach to compact, sequential and sustainable development of the larger urban areas along the Dublin – Belfast economic and transport corridor, along which there are settlements with significant populations such as Dundalk and Drogheda.” (p37)

“As part of the National Planning Framework, the Government intends to capitalise upon and further support and promote the inherent economic potential of the corridor, building upon existing strengths. To do this, there will be a focus on developing the corridor as a distinct spatial area with international visibility: **Effectively planning and developing large centres of population and employment along the main economic corridor, including in particular Drogheda and Dundalk;**” (p112)”

“National Policy Objective 44 In co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland, to further support and develop the economic potential of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor and in particular the core Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry network and to promote **and enhance its international visibility.**” (p112)

Land- Zoning

The current draft CDP is reliant on population growth and does not clearly outline additional supports and services that would service the expanding population.

The two draft CDPs from Louth and Meath predict a population of over 51,000 by 2027. That level of growth requires special attention to ensure that employment opportunities can match the growth. However, the Louth plan does not identify any suitable location for a large IDA or commercial park that would be capable of attracting FDI. This contrasts with the situation in Dundalk where over 800 acres of land is developed for FDI investment, including two IDA buildings recently funded.

The zoning plan is reliant on the private sector to create Masterplans for ‘general employment land, and specifically states that there is no budget from the council to do so. Our recent experience over the past 20 years leads us to believe that the private sector will not fund a Masterplan and that suitable land and property will not be developed by the end of this CDP’s timeframe.

The yellow residential zone in map below clearly indicates the planned population boom but there is only a small site (circa 15 acres) for business & technology zoning which contrasts strongly with

Detailed Submission – Chapter by Chapter Inputs:

Draft CDP: Chapter / section	Current Status	Submission
Introduction Chapter 1		
1-1	Draft CDP highlights 'profound change' to Drogheda & Dundalk as designated Regional Growth Centres (RGC)	It should be recognised that Drogheda needs additional support to elevate itself to standards of other nationwide Regional Growth Centres / RGCs, (all who are past Gateway or 'Linked' Gateways) who have existing infrastructural advantages (IoT, IDA/EI/LEO HQ, past funding etc).
1-2	There is a shift from 'Border' to alignment with Dublin and 'Eastern-Midland' region	Drogheda's proximity to Dublin should be highlighted as key FDI and business strength, as per most recent FDI Policy from Louth Economic Forum (LEF). Drogheda as Largest & Fastest growing town status should be highlighted as a key USP that needs additional support, and increased management to ensure that orderly growth is maintained.
1-3	Predicts ' 50,000' population by 2031	The current population projections included in Louth (6,914) and Meath (3,500) CDPs predicts that that population in Drogheda will grow to over 51,000 in 2027, exceeding the Regional Assembly and Ireland 2040 plans. This excludes the additional circa 30,000 population within 10km of Drogheda that will also consider Drogheda their Regional Growth Centre. This under-estimation will have a direct effect on all services and funding needed to meet demands of existing and new residents.
1-3	"Recent rapid residential development needs to be balanced with employment growth to reverse commuting trends"	The current CDP does not contain clear plans on how this will be achieved. Drogheda does not include enough 'Business & technology' or 'any 'Research & Innovation' zoning to attract high value jobs that will entice the 15,000 skilled commuters within 15 minutes of Drogheda M1 park.
Chapter 5 'Economy and Employment'		
5-1	CDP states "resident /work-force ratio" in Drogheda of 76%. '	The 'Embrace the change' data (appendix 5) in Feb' 2020 from Drogheda Chamber, BIDS and The Mill Enterprise Hub noted a 58% 'resident/workforce'

		<p>ratio in the '15 minute zone' from the M1 Retail Park.</p> <p>We recognise that this is a Louth CDP but the lower resident/workforce ratio across Louth/Meath area should also be noted to highlight the opportunity to attract high-value jobs by promoting the availability of skilled commuters. EMRA specifically highlights the need to reduce commuting</p>
5-5	<p>"If a Plan is to support economic growth, it needs to ensure that there are sufficient lands available for investment and that these lands can be serviced by the required roads, water services, energy, and telecommunications infrastructure".</p>	<p>The draft CDP doesn't ensure that there is land for high-value jobs. In particular there is no designated site for an IDA park, or a commercial business park that will attract 'business & technology' companies.</p>
5-5	<p>CDP highlights the need for 'Clustering' and 'Orderly Growth (strategic employment locations aligned with growth'</p>	<p>Draft CDP doesn't promote any Cluster development in Drogheda- In particular, there is an opportunity for Drogheda to develop as a Fintech Hub or Centre of Excellence due to current work on The Fintech Corridor. We believe that the CDP should include a specific objective to create a Fintech Business park that includes a Centre of Excellence.</p>
5-13 'ee3'	<p>"To improve the cluster-specific business environment by putting in place a favourable business ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship that supports the development of new industrial value chains and emerging industries."</p>	<p>There are no specific initiatives in the draft CDP that will drive this aim.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland's submission to Louth pre-CDP included the need to create a Northeast Business Innovation Centre (BIC). The plan for DDIH in Youthreach building also highlighted the opportunity to create a Northeast BIC in Drogheda (with The Mill) that would help to attract scalable startups and market Drogheda as an innovative town. We currently don't have any government enterprise support agency based in Drogheda – this could help us foster innovation and provide jobs. We request that it is inserted in CDP as an aim of Louth Council.</p>
5-5 'ee3'	<p>"To continue to promote collaboration and partnerships between business and industrial groups and DkIT that will encourage research and development and provide further education and</p>	<p>The draft CDP ignores EMRA proposal to create a DKIT campus in Drogheda - The campus could include a Centre of Excellence to support proposed fintech cluster.</p> <p>Drogheda Map does not include any 'Research & Innovation' zoning. It's likely we will be the only RGC without that zoning as the other four have IoTs. The EMRA strategy includes locating a campus of DKIT in</p>

	training opportunities for workers.”	Drogheda and it was also included in the previous Louth CDP.
5-15 'ee14'	“To ensure there are sufficient appropriately located lands identified for enterprise and industrial uses in the County in accordance with the designation of each settlement in the Settlement Hierarchy that will support economic investment and employment growth.”	There is very small area in Drogheda allocated for 'business & technology' The zoned 'general employment' requires Master Plan and specifically says there is no budget. 'General Employment' does not meet the needs of EMRA strategy to promote high-value jobs that will retain commuters and provide 'orderly growth' between employment and residential. There is no 'town centre' provision for high-value employment - We propose that Drogheda Digital Innovation Hub could be starting point for a town centre 'business & technology' district . There is no land identified specifically for FDI, either via IDA or private investment – This resigns Drogheda to securing a low level of FDI jobs which does not align with our RGC status as a focal point for employment.
5-20 EE31	“To support the development of Smart City Programmes in the Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk.”	There is an opportunity for Drogheda (and Dundalk) to take a lead on how regional towns in Ireland adopt Smart technology. We believe that the government and EU will be looking at projects that can use technology to improve services, and think that the CDP should state that it is a priority for Drogheda to apply to be a 'pilot test' town on any upcoming Smart City Initiatives.
5-20	76% Workforce / Residential ratio	The 'Embrace The Change' Data from Census 2016 has a 58% ratio. This highlights the need to work asap on the Joint Urban plan to reduce this high ratio. Irrespective of what ratio figure is used, the Drogheda rate is much lower than the Dundalk rate (99%) and the CDP should state that Drogheda needs additional support to lower the rate.
5-21	Master Plan needed for M1 Retail and Tom Roes land	This Masterplan which is reliant on private investors is unlikely to happen without public support from Louth Council. This will effectively stifle Drogheda's potential for future employment, especially in the coming few years. Louth CDP should identify some 'quick wins' for employment land. For example, land adjacent to The Mill which was part of a Newtown Enterprise Park plan in 2009 , or Town centre land/buildings as part of the Westgate vision.
5-22 'ee32'	To promote the Regional Growth Centre of	The FDI policy of the Louth Economic Forum states that Drogheda should be marketed as part of

	Drogheda as a primary centre for employment in the County that maximises the locational advantage of the town along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor	'Greater Dublin area'. We believe that is the correct case and that the 'locational advantage' is its proximity to Dublin and should be referenced.
5-22 EE33	"To develop an economic vision and strategy for Drogheda in association with Meath County Council and other stakeholders as part of the Joint Urban / Local Area Plan for Drogheda."	This is critical and needs a timeline that includes preliminary consultancy/research in 2021 that can be completed prior to its commencement. The Cross Boundary statutory Joint Urban Area Plan (UAP) can't be commenced until the Louth CDP is published which will mean that it is unlikely to be published until 2022 or 2023. The Draft CDP is missing a critical Strategic Objective ("SO") – i.e. setting out the urgency to work with Meath County Council on addressing all aspects of the future relationship between Drogheda and East Meath in the context of planning for the future of Drogheda as Ireland's largest town .
5.22 EE35	' develop employment lands in the town – M1 Retail, Tom Roes'. 'No development will take place in the absence of a Master Plan'	This is Drogheda's biggest issue and we don't believe it is addressed appropriately in the draft CDP. How long will a Master Plan take, and will Private sector do it? There is no plan for town centre employment to align with a National 'Town Centre first' policy from the Department of Enterprise. The WestGate vision would benefit from being updated as it does not include an enterprise/employment section which is now considered essential in 'Town centre first' policies. The Drogheda Digital Innovation Hub (DDIH) project could be the start of a co-ordinated town centre 'business & technology ' zone? There is no plan to develop 'business & technology' zone, apart from small plot at Greenhills. This is contrary to EMRA plan and Ireland 2040 plan to match employment and population growth as a RGC focal point. It contrasts hugely with the 800 to 1000 acres of zoned land in Dundalk. There is no specific plan to work with IDA to develop an IDA park in the North side or town centre. We currently don't have any IDA properties in the 'Louth' section of Drogheda. For example, this could include creation of a Fintech park including Hub and Centre of Excellence.

		<p>The Ardee (EE44) and Dundalk (EE40 and 41) policy objectives specifically target FDI, but a similar policy objective is not included for Drogheda which is unacceptable.</p> <p>The October 2020 report from regional assemblies' notes the need to create ' Co-working Hubs of Scale'. There is an opportunity to work with private investors, IDA, and EI to create a specially built co-working park or large hub to target FDI and indigenous companies that currently employ 'commuters'</p>

Drogheda, a 2018/2019 European Top 10 Micro-City

<https://www.breakingnews.ie/business/drogheda-named-one-of-europes-emerging-micro-cities-903605.html> (11th February 2019)

Drogheda in County Louth has been identified as one of Europe's emerging 'micro-cities'. A report on European Cities and Regions of the future in the Financial Times FDI Magazine highlighted where Drogheda has excelled at International level.

This should align with Ireland 2040 plan (p112) to promote Drogheda on an International scale, due to its status as a Regional Growth Centre. The current draft CDP negates Drogheda's FDI ambitions, does not identify a suitable location for an IDA or commercial business & technology park, does not focus on Clusters, and has very limited zoning for high-value FDI clients.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & POTENTIAL

Drogheda & District Chamber
Aligning business together

DROGHEDA IS RANKED:

- **TOP 10 MICRO EUROPEAN CITIES OF THE FUTURE 2018/2019**
- **TOP 5 MICRO EUROPEAN CITIES - BUSINESS FRIENDLINESS**
- **TOP 10 MICRO EUROPEAN CITIES - CONNECTIVITY**
- **TOP 10 MICRO EUROPEAN CITIES - ECONOMIC POTENTIAL**

FDI INTELLIGENCE REPORT - FINANCIAL TIMES

Appendix A: Action plan for jobs – Future Jobs Ireland 2019

- Pillar 1: embracing innovation and technological change. Deliverables:
 - o Form Top Teams in AI, GovTech and offshore renewables
 - o Embrace digital transformation of public services
 - o Develop eHealth opportunities
 - o Understand Disruptive Technologies innovation
 - o Develop Ireland as a centre for developing and testing new technologies (eg. Collaborative robotics, augmented VR, etc.
 - o Deliver industry strategy 4.0 strategy / national digital strategy and national AI strategy
- Pillar 2: improving SME productivity. Deliverables:
 - o Increase impact of LEOs
 - o Improve management take up of EI and LEO productivity supports for SMEs
 - o Provide new investment funding for scale up of small business
 - o Encourage growth of clusters to deepen linkages between foreign and Irish owned business
 - o Strengthen national competitive council impact
 - o Develop new female entrepreneurship strategy
- Pillar 3: Enhancing Skills and developing and attracting talent. Deliverables:
 - o Engrain lifelong learning
 - o Promote flexible training options
 - o Match training to the skills needs
 - o Ensure economic migration system is responsive to labour market needs
 - o Provide training on emerging technologies
 - o Develop programme for SME taking parting training and upskilling
 - o Introduce new online marketplace for apprenticeship opportunities
 - o Offer career advice to workers to public employment service
- Pillar 4: increasing participation in the labour force. Deliverables:
 - o Develop guidelines for employers on flexible working options
 - o Conduct a national consultation on extending flexible working options
 - o Promote work experience for young people
 - o Improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities
 - o Develop a return to work service of particular groups
 - o Proceed incentives for people who want to work longer
- Pillar 5: transitioning to a low carbon economy. Deliverables:
 - o Review the regional dimensions of economic and employment implication
 - o Position Ireland as centre for research and innovation of smart grids, buildings and renewable technologies
 - o Deliver national deep retrofit programme for housing stock
 - o Promote electric vehicles
 - o Identify barriers to development of bioeconomy
 - o Identify opportunities for certification standards and labels – e.g. for bio-based products
 - o Develop and implement green procurement policy

Appendix B: Project Ireland 2040:

- competitive, innovative and resilient enterprise base is the aim
- boosting regional growth potential and incomes; increasing research, development and innovation, and investment in higher and further education and training.
- IDA Ireland's current Regional Property Programme of €150m can be built upon to deliver enterprise property solutions across the regions.
- IDA Ireland will actively market the regions for opportunities arising from Brexit
- IDA Regional Property facilities and advanced provision in Border regions will be enhanced.
- IDA Ireland is looking to enhance its regional property facilities in the border region. So far it has delivered an advanced building in Sligo with a new building planned in Dundalk within the next two years.



Appendix C: NPF City and Town Population Growth Comparisons

NPF City and Town Population Growth Comparisons:

1996-2016					2011-2016:			
The ten NPF-Designated Centres:					The ten NPF-Designated Centres:			
City and Town Population Growth Comparisons:								
Timeframe 1996-2016:					Timeframe 2011-2016:			
The ten NPF-Designated Centres:					Population			
Cities:	1996	2016	Growth	% Growth	2011	2016	Growth	% Growth
Dublin	952,692	1,173,179	220,487	23.14%	1,110,627	1,173,179	62,552	5.63%
Cork	179,954	208,669	28,715	15.96%	198,582	208,669	10,087	5.08%
Limerick	79,137	94,192	15,055	19.02%	91,454	94,192	2,738	2.99%
Galway	57,363	79,934	22,571	39.35%	76,778	79,934	3,156	4.11%
Waterford	44,155	53,504	9,349	21.17%	51,519	53,504	1,985	3.85%
Drogheda-LBM	28,960	52,828	23,868	82.42%	49,467	52,828	3,361	6.79%
Towns:								
Dundalk-Blackrock	30,195	39,004	8,809	29.17%	37,816	39,004	1,188	3.14%
Athlone	15,544	21,349	5,805	37.35%	20,153	21,349	1,196	5.93%
Letterkenny	11,996	19,274	7,278	60.67%	19,588	19,274	-314	-1.60%
Sligo	18,509	19,199	690	3.73%	19,452	19,199	-253	-1.30%

Source: CSO, 1996 and 2016 Censuses

The State population increase (1996-2016) was 31.32%. Drogheda-LBM's 82.42% growth equates to 3.05% per annum compound.

CSO, 2011 and 2016 Censuses to have exceeded the State Growth.

Drogheda-LBM's growth was over 1% above Dublin, the second highest percentage growth

"Source: Dr Brian Hughes, TU Dublin"

Appendix D: Population:

CSO 2020 House Building Figures – Drogheda has highest New Dwellings

'Drogheda' the Eircode area with the most new dwelling completions in Q2 2020

Figure 3 shows the number of new dwelling completions at Eircode Routing Key level for Q2 2020.

The Eircode area with the highest number of new dwelling completions was A92 'Drogheda' (190 completions).

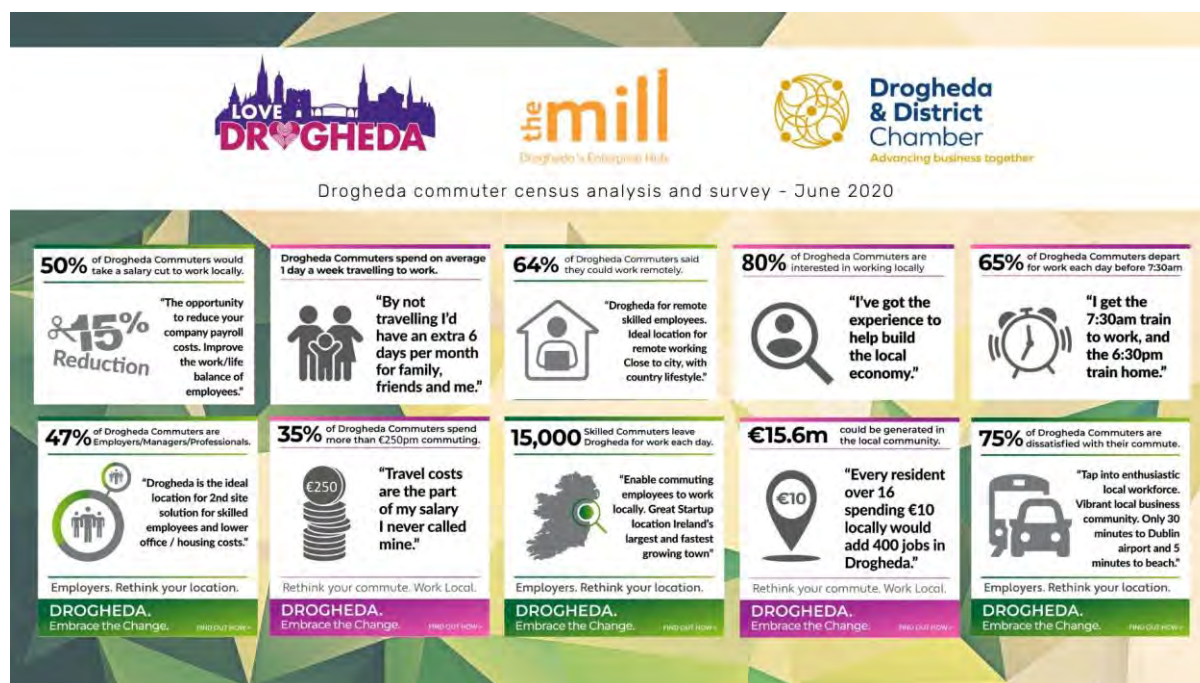
<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/ndc/newdwellingcompletionsq22020/#:~:text=There%20were%203%2C290%20new%20dwelling,year%20decrease%20since%20Q3%202013.&text=The%20number%20of%20scheme%20dwellings,to%201%2C842%20in%20Q2%202020.>

Housing Completions for three years, 2016-2018

NPF Settlements - Housing Completions for three years, 2016-2018 (excl. Dublin)				
City / Town	Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018	Aggregate
Limerick	288	460	490	1,238
Cork (S+N)	258	460	490	1,208
Drogheda	208	384	613	1,205
Galway	352	409	431	1,192
Dundalk	159	231	296	686
Waterford	131	190	270	591
Letterkenny	133	141	200	474
Sligo	63	98	168	329
Athlone	36	48	82	166
Source: CSO Housing Completion data, Release dated 07.02.2019				
Note: Drogheda's completions are just 72 short of Dundalk + Waterford's.				

"Source: Dr Brian Hughes, TU Dublin"

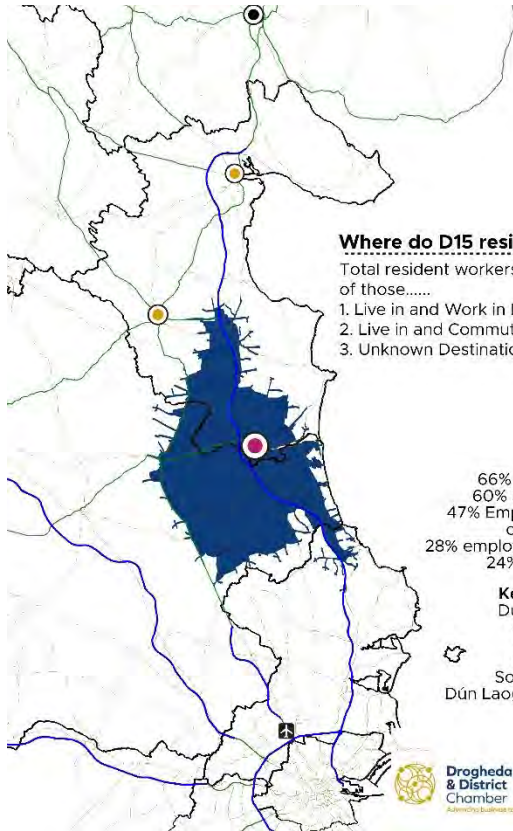
Appendix E: Summary of 'Embrace The Change' data collected by The Mill, Drogheda Chamber, and Love Drogheda BIDS (March 2020).
Analysis of 2016 Census Commuter figures.



See <https://www.droghedachamber.ie/drogheda-embrace-the-change> for additional information.

The Commuter survey result included:

- 55% were dis-satisfied or very dis-satisfied with their current Commute
- 75% are interested or very interested in working locally.
- 50% would take a salary cut to work locally; up to 15% salary cut was the preferred option.
- 48% of respondent were in middle or senior roles (24% Manager or Senior Professional, 24% Professional)
- Strong response from commuter with highly-valued IT skills – 109 respondents had skills in 'Data analytics', with 107 employed in 'mobile tech', and 75 respondents with 'cloud computing' skills.
- The majority were commuting to Dublin City Centre (35%) with another 20% commuting to North Dublin
- 50% drove a car with no passengers to work
- 65% departed for work before 7:30am
- 50% took more than 60 minutes to commute
- 35% spend more than €350 per month commuting
- 6% said they were self-employed. 8 people employed more than 50 ftes.
- 53% of respondents were unaware of local Enterprise hub
- 64% said they could work remotely up to 2 days per week.



Drogheda - 15 Minute Catchment Zone (D15)

Key Facts:

- * 35,663 resident workers
- * 21,526 local jobs in D15
- * 42% of resident workers commute out of D15

Where do D15 residents work?

- Total resident workers: 35,663 of those.....
1. Live in and Work in D15: 13,847 (39%)
 2. Live in and Commute Out: 14,992 (42%)
 3. Unknown Destinations: 6,824 (19%)

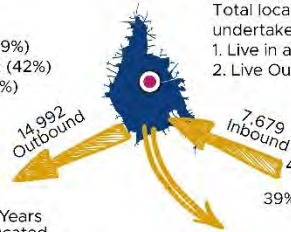
- 66% Aged 20-44 Years
- 60% 3rd Level Educated
- 47% Employers and Managers or Professionals
- 28% employed in Retail & Wholesale
- 24% employed in ICT

Key Destinations:

- Dublin City (5,152)
- Fingal (4,890)
- Louth (1,592)
- Meath (1,440)
- South Dublin (703)
- Dún Laoghaire Rathdown (457)

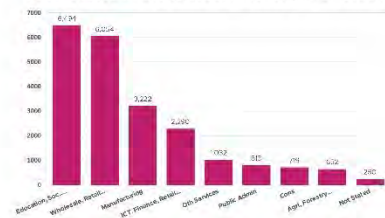
Who works in D15?

- Total local jobs: 21,526 undertaken by.....
1. Live in and Work in D15: 13,847 (64%)
 2. Live Out and Commute In: 7,679 (36%)



- 65% Aged 20-44 Years
- 54% 3rd Level Educated
- 42% Employers and Managers or Professionals
- 39% employed in Retail & Wholesale
- 18% employed in ICT

Jobs located in D15 (21,526) - Industry Profile, 2016



©2016 All Rights Reserved. Sector 1 Data (data.gov.ie) licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) license. Developed using GIS. Data Source: OpenStreetMap, CSO Census 2016. Data Analytics: Justin Cleaver



Drogheda & District Chamber
A Drogheda Business Partner

