

From: Mark Lusby [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday 8 February 2019 16:43
To: rses
Subject: This submission refers to the draft RSES Report.

Dear North and West Regional Assembly,

The Friends of the Derry Walls is a voluntary organisation with the mission of becoming the voice of the Derry Walls, raising ambitions for their care and presentation, driving public engagement with the Walls and ensuring that the Walls are fully exploited as a resource for educational, cultural and economic development.

We are part of the Irish Walled Towns Network. Several of our sister walled towns e.g. Athenry, Galway, Jamestown and Rindoon are in the North & Western Region; and even more are in the Southern Region. Through the 1688-1690 Wars in Ireland between the two Kings, Derry has also a special battlefield-heritage link with Aughrim in Co. Galway.

The value of this all-island heritage resource has been recognised by both the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Heritage Council of Ireland. The full exploitation of this shared heritage resource, and of heritage towns in general, as a contributor to the western half of Ireland's economic regeneration, has been limited by the absence of a direct rail service for the west. Modern, frequent, fast, low environmental-impact rail services are the normal expectation of the European 'culturally curious' visitor.

Therefore we strongly welcome and support Objectives 115 (a) and 115 (b) of the draft RSES Report which refer specifically to the re-opening of the Western Rail Corridor from Claremorris to Athenry and northwards from Claremorris to Sligo. We believe the redevelopment of this infrastructure to be vital for the future of our regions both from an economic and environmental perspective.

We also endorse and support Objective 118 referencing the feasibility of extending the rail network to the North West City Region (Derry/Letterkenny) from Sligo and Dublin

Best wishes

Mark

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