



Burren Lowlands CLG
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RSES Submissions
NWRA,
The Square,
Ballaghaderreen,
Co. Roscommon
Email: rses@nwra.ie

Re: Submission in Relation to Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly

To whom it concerns,

Burren Lowlands CLG welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly as part of the consultation process.

Burren Lowlands CLG supports the approach of the Atlantic Economic Corridor, see document attached. Burren Lowlands CLG is an umbrella organisation for the development of Gort town and its hinterland, whose aim is to make the region a better place to live, work and visit.

The priorities for Gort and its hinterland over the next number years will be to capitalise on the motorway infrastructure that is now positioned one minute from the town centre. We also want to utilise the use of the towns' railway infrastructure. We want to see Gort targeted as a location for inward investment, specifically in the areas of international services and life sciences. We are positioned between many third level institutions in the west. It is important to note that Gort is a key location for a logistics hub, given its proximity to Shannon airport, 30 minutes away and Foynes Port, particularly in the context of Brexit.

Gort town and its hinterland in south Galway and north Clare is now becoming known as the Burren Lowlands region. This is an area rich in natural and built heritage in itself, alongside the global attraction of the Burren, holding huge potential for tourism as a major industry for the

region. The literary heritage of Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats of the area lives on in the iconic local attractions of Coole Park and Thoor Ballylee, along with legendary Kilmacduagh monastic settlement all within a close radius. Gort is a suitable, architecturally primed. market town for the development of services of tourism and services associated with the tourism industry.

The area has been steadily making progress in developing itself from a grassroots voluntary level through being designated a Rural Economic Development Zone, a Town & Village Renewal Scheme and working with Fáilte Ireland on developing a WAW Loop through the region. Partnering with Smart Atlantic Way, Gort hopes to become a model rural town and hinterland area, utilising the benefits of data analytics and digital technology to assist the development of the western region. These opportunities are currently being explored. NUI Galway are willing to use these many developments as a doctoral case study at some point in time, with the area being considered a 'living lab' for rural development. However, targeted inward investment is essential for any major sustainable impact to occur.

This grassroots work is priming the locality for such investment by for example, the development of an Enterprise Centre, near to the Railway, and supporting programme which is underway. This Burren Lowlands project is developing an enterprise platform, creating a hub for the development of activities to create and attract additional jobs to this cross-border area of Co. Galway and Co. Clare. Supporting start-ups, entrepreneurship, existing business networks and remote working opportunities are key priorities to be implemented through three pillar areas, Enterprise, Community and Tourism. These developments are creating a landing space for mobile investment, the potential for this is opening up. We are also working with an existing FDI to support their expansion particularly where it supports the growth of SME and other MNCs.

Entrepreneurship and innovation among the farming community will also be part of supporting the innate agricultural industry of the region. The enterprise initiatives include support for migrants living in the area, utilising our human resource network particularly servicing tourism, international culture and language-based services. It will also take in working with the youth of the local region to promote and raise awareness of entrepreneurship and innovation with a 'tech garage' as part of this hub initiative.

With the backing of targeted inward investment and given all the positive contributing elements of the locality, substantial sustainable progress can be made to make this town and its hinterland region a better place to live, work and visit. While securing a positive economic and social future for generations, this will contribute significantly to the overall development of the rural West of Ireland.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,
Teresa Butler

On behalf of Burren Lowlands CLG.

Tel. 087 237 64 59

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