

Open for Business: Top Five Reasons to Look to Louth



Drogheda

Centrally-located on the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor, Louth is open for business like never before.

Following the UK decision to leave the EU, the border county is rolling out a range of business supports with a collaborative approach helping deliver economic growth and job creation.

As well as its strategic location between the two main population centres on the island, Louth has a first class road and rail infrastructure; the Republic's two largest towns in Drogheda and Dundalk; leading edge broadband coverage and excellent higher education provision at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT).

In addition, according to Joan Martin, Chief Executive, Louth County Council, "Those establishing businesses in Louth benefit from an enterprise-friendly environment where the local authority actively works with entrepreneurs to help them succeed. Start-ups and growing businesses in the county also benefit from more affordable property solutions and the availability of skilled people, many of whom previously commuted to Dublin but now want to take their careers to the next level closer to home.

"As part of its economic development drive, [Louth County Council](#) offers a range of business incentives and supports to encourage those with a business idea to develop it in Louth."

When it comes to business, here are five great reasons to look to Louth:

Ireland's Most Connected County

Whether it's road infrastructure (the M1 motorway traverses the county north/south); rail services (stations on the Dublin-Belfast line); air access (Dublin Airport is as readily accessible to much of Co Louth as it is to parts of Dublin! with Belfast Airport being just a 45 min. drive); broadband (third best provision of any county in Ireland and driving towards No1) or working population within a 30-60 minute drive, Louth has a compelling case for being Ireland's most connected county.

This gives businesses setting up in the county the confidence that they will have a ready market to tap into while those with ambitions to trade on an all-island basis have Northern Ireland on their doorstep as a first entry point to the huge UK market.

'Can Do' Attitude



Market Square, Dundalk

With a long tradition of resourcefulness and an enterprising, business-friendly culture, Louth has further stepped up its game over the last decade in being proactively pro-business and the results of this approach can be seen in the level of new investment attracted to the county.

The county's 'can do' attitude is reflected by Louth County Council who act as a 'one stop shop' for investors – whether they be local start-ups or large multinationals. The Council's economic development team partner with businesses to remove any obstacles that might deter them or slow down their journey to business success in Louth.

Incentives

As well as aiming to limit any ripple effects from Brexit when it comes, Louth County Council is determined to position the county to benefit from this major shift in the economic

landscape. To help bolster the retail sector in Ireland's two largest towns, the local authority is offering a series of retail incentives. As well as the Drogheda and Dundalk schemes to encourage investment in existing retail units, there are also grants for small businesses in the local villages and towns with extra incentives now available for premises that have been vacant for more than two years.

In an effort to help make the key retail areas more attractive to shoppers, shopfront grants and design guidelines have been introduced. For new developments, a new [Development Contribution Scheme](#) provides reduced commercial levies alongside reductions and exemptions for developments in the town centres of Drogheda, Dundalk, Ardee and Dunleer.

One Team

A unique multi-agency partnership bringing together public and private sector stakeholders to advance Louth's economic agenda, the [Louth Economic Forum](#) has been active since 2009.

Currently chaired by Martin Cronin, chairman of InterTrade Ireland and former CEO of Forfas and Director of Operations at IDA Ireland, the Forum is a great way to present a united Louth team to businesses considering the county as a location. The range of stakeholders represented on it also means that it is perfectly placed to tackle any potential deterrents to growth and to ensure that the rhetoric of Louth being open for business is very much matched in reality.

Mr Cronin says: "Louth has responded very proactively to the economic downturn by bringing key stakeholders together as a catalyst for development. I expect implementation of the strategies developed by the Forum to place Louth at the forefront of future development."

Planning for Growth

Through Louth County Council's joined-up approach to service delivery, businesses not only have access to grants and enterprise support but also to information and assistance with planning. Economic development and planning sit alongside each other within Louth County Council for a more efficient service and recognising that every planned development has the potential to contribute to jobs growth in the county.

As economic recovery continues, planning applications in Louth are up by 42% since 2013 and the Council's new retail and development incentives are set to see this figure increase further.

So, if you're keen to establish or grow your business, why not look to [Louth today](#)?