

# Appendix 1

## *Review of Policy Context Documents*

# 1 Policy Context

## **1.1 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region (RSES) 2020-2032**

The RSES is a strategic development framework published by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly and sets out a vision for the sustainable physical, economic and social development of the region and provide guidance for local level policies.

Castlebar is outlined as a key town within the RSES and is noted as being the principal retail town in Mayo and having a vibrant town centre. An LTP is required to be prepared for Castlebar under the RSES.

The relevant Key Policy Objectives (KPO) and Regional Policy Objectives (RPO) from the RSES are;

- KPO: Improve cycle and walking tourism/recreational infrastructure and connectivity of the Great Western Greenway at Castlebar to Westport and Wild Atlantic Way and other tourism related infrastructure;
- KPO: Remove barriers to development through enhanced road and rail connectivity to and from Castlebar;
- RPO 6.18: Utilise smart technology to provide for enhanced (bus) service experience for customers;
- RPO 6.19: Reduce dependency on fossil-fuel powered vehicles;
- RPO 6.21: Undertake network reviews for city, regional centres and support towns across the region, to provide local bus services;
- RPO 6.22: Provide new interchange facilities and enhanced bus waiting facilities together with enhanced passenger information, utilising smart technology in appropriate circumstances;
- RPO 6.26: The walking and cycling offer within the region shall be improved to encourage more people to walk and cycle, through:
  - (a) Preparation and implementation of Local Transport Plans for Galway Metropolitan Area, Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns, which shall encourage a travel mode shift from private vehicular use towards sustainable travel modes of walking, cycling and use of public transport.
  - (b) Safe walking and cycle infrastructure shall be provided in urban and rural areas, the design shall be informed by published design manuals, included the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and the NTA Cycle Manual.
  - (c) Development of a network of Greenways.

- RPO 6.29: The management of space in town and village centres should deliver a high level of priority and permeability for walking, cycling and public transport modes to create accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe, places to work, live, shop and engage in community life;
- RPO 6.30: Planning at the local level should promote walking, cycling and public transport by maximising the number of people living within walking and cycling distance of their neighbourhood or district centres, public transport services and other services at the local level such as schools;
- RPO 6.32: Invest in transport networks and services in the region that are socially inclusive and provide a quality of service, connectivity and facilities to meet all societal needs, disabilities (including mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments) and meet the needs and opportunities of an ageing population;
- RPO 6.33: Reduce dependency on the fossil-fuel powered vehicles and have regard to the National Policy Framework for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport; AND
- RPO 6.34: Promote deployment of targeted, convenient and safe recharging infrastructure across the region to meet the changing needs of the electric vehicle with particular emphasis in public parking areas and employment National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF)

The NPF is the Government's high-level strategic plan to improve transport, tourism and sport infrastructure by 2040.

Sub headed Project Ireland 2040, the framework seeks to achieve ten strategic outcomes, building around the overarching themes of wellbeing, equality and opportunity. Two of these ten shared priorities are Sustainable Mobility and Enhanced Amenity and Heritage. Sustainable Mobility's special focus is on the provision of safe alternative active travel options to alleviate congestion and help to meet climate action objectives, where Enhanced Amenity and Heritage aims to investment in high-quality infrastructure to create living space with defined character and attractiveness.

## **1.2 National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI)**

The purpose of the NIFTI is to support the delivery of the NPF. Transport is recognised as a key enabler of the National Strategic Outcomes, namely in terms of sustainable mobility and transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society. The NIFTI outlines 10 Key Transport Challenges (KTC) which all transportation projects should aim to address. These are:

- KTC1: Balancing the protection and renewal of existing assets with significant investment in new infrastructure within available resources;

- KTC2: Decarbonising the transport sector while facilitating increased travel demand;
- KTC3: Supporting Ireland's international connectivity through appropriate surface investment;
- KTC4: Incorporating innovative and emerging technologies within the future transport system;
- KTC5: Maintaining existing transport infrastructure and ensuring the resilience of the most strategically important parts of the network;
- KTC6: Increasing sustainable mode share to reduce emissions and address urban congestion;
- KTC7: Improving interurban connectivity, particularly in the South, Northwest and Northeast;
- KTC8: Safeguarding accessibility for rural Ireland by protecting and renewing existing infrastructure;
- KTC9: Ensuring the future capacity of key strategic links to Ireland's international gateways; AND
- KTC10: Ensuring that transport investment decisions are robust to unanticipated shocks and uncertainty.

### **1.3 National Development Plan 2018-2027 (NDP)**

The NDP underpins the NPF by outlining the investment priorities for the framework to ensure successful implementation and value-for-money deliverables. The plan defines National Strategic Outcomes (NSO), with the relevant NSOs defined as;

- NSO 1 – Compact Growth;
- NSO 3 – Public Transport;
- NSO 4 - Sustainable Mobility;
- NSO 8 - Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate Resilient Society.

### **1.4 Climate Action Plan 2023**

This document is the Government's plan for tackling climate breakdown. It outlines the current state of play across key sectors including Electricity, Transport, Built Environment, Industry and Agriculture and charts a course towards ambitious decarbonisation targets. The Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23) builds on the Climate Action Plan 2021 (CAP21) with the objective to achieve a net zero carbon energy system and create a resilient, vibrant and sustainable country.

To meet the required level of emissions reduction as set out in the CAP21 by the Government of Ireland, transport related emissions are set to reduce by 51% by 2030. The CAP23 calls for a significant cut in transport emissions by 2030 in order to meet

this sectoral emission ceiling. This includes a 20% reduction in total vehicle kilometres, a reduction in fuel usage, and significant increases to sustainable transport trips and modal share.

The CAP23 highlights that meeting the 2030 transport abatement targets will require transformational change and accelerated action across all key decarbonisation channels. The CAP21 targets have been revised to meet this higher level of ambition, including a 20% reduction in total vehicle kilometres, a reduction in fuel usage, and significant increases to sustainable transport trips and modal share

This is to be done through active travel infrastructure, improved public transport, planning, innovation and financial supports for improved system, travel, vehicle and demand efficiencies.

Measures related to active travel (from the CAP21) include:

- Action 231: Continue the improvement and expansion of the Active Travel and Greenway Network;
- Action 232: Development of a coherent and connected National Cycle Network Strategy;
- Action 234: Encourage an increased level of modal shift towards Active Travel (walking and cycling) and away from private car use;
- Action 255: Balance better movement priorities within urban areas so transition the built environment and public domain from one that is “vehicle centred” to being “people centred” to align with the goal of net zero by 2050; and
- Action 260: Increase provision of park and ride/share at transport interchanges.
- locations.

### **1.5 National Sustainable Mobility Policy**

The National Sustainable Mobility Policy To sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland’s overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade. The target is to deliver at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys and a 10% reduction in kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars by 2030 in line with metrics for transport set out in the CAP21/CAP23.

The goals of the related Action Plan (2022-2025) are:

- Goal 1: Improve mobility safety;
- Goal 2: Decarbonise Public Transport;
- Goal 3: Expand availability of sustainable mobility in metropolitan areas;
- Goal 4: Expand availability of sustainable mobility in regional and rural areas;
- Goal 5: Encourage people to choose sustainable mobility over the private car;
- Goal 6: Take a whole of journey approach to mobility, promoting inclusive access for all;

- Goal 7: Design infrastructure according to Universal Design Principles and Hierarchy of Road Users Model;
- Goal 8: Promote sustainable mobility through research and citizen engagement;
- Goal 9: Better integrate land use and transport planning at all levels; and
- Goal 10: Promote smart and integrated mobility through innovative technologies and development of appropriate regulation.

### **1.6 Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future**

This policy document is A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 and includes the following five key aims:

- Improve quality of life and accessibility to transport for all and in particular, for people with reduced mobility and those who may experience isolation due to lack of transport,
- Improve economic competitiveness through maximising the efficiency of the transport system and alleviating congestion and infrastructural bottlenecks,
- Minimise the negative impacts of transport on the local and global environment through reducing localised air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions,
- Reduce overall travel demand and commuting distances travelled by the private car,
- Improve security of energy supply by reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels.

These aims are underpinned four principal themes:

1. Reduce distance travelled by private car by focusing population and employment growth in urban areas, combined with fiscal measures to encourage behavioural change;
2. Ensure alternatives to the car are more widely available, through improved public transport, cycling and walking;
3. Improve the fuel efficiency of motorised transport through improved fleet structure, energy efficient driving and alternative technologies; and
4. Strengthen institutional arrangements to deliver the Smarter Travel targets.

These four principal themes were supported by a total of 49 actions to be delivered over the lifetime of the policy and an overview of the current implementation status of

those individual actions is being published alongside the nine background papers for public consultation.

Action 15 of Smarter Travel relates to cycling and commits toward the publication and implementation of a National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) that will address issues such as –

- The creation of traffic-free urban centres to facilitate cycling;
- Investment in a national cycle network with urban networks given priority;
- Cycle training for schoolchildren; and
- Integration of cycling with other transport modes, e.g., carriage of bicycles on public transport.

Action 16 relates to walking and outlines a number of proposed initiatives designed to create a culture of walking in Ireland. These include –

- The creation of larger traffic-free areas in urban centres;
- Providing safe pedestrian routes;
- Improving the surface quality of footpaths;
- Introducing 30 km/h zones in central urban areas where appropriate; and
- Publication of a national walking policy.

### **1.7 Sustainable Mobility Policy Review**

The Sustainable Mobility Policy Review, Background Paper 2, Active Travel was published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to inform public consultation on Ireland's sustainable mobility policy. The purpose of the paper is to provide an opportunity to review public transport policy 'to ensure services are sustainable into the future and area meeting the needs of a modern economy' and by reviewing the role of Active Travel modes in the context of the wider transport network while raising some issues for consideration in developing future policy.

The five benefits of Active Travel that can be capitalised on are identified as:

- Environmental - reduced levels of carbon emissions and greenhouse gases;
- Health - improved levels of fitness and public health generally from increased activity;
- Safety - increased levels of active travel can stimulate the increased provision of quality footpaths and cycle paths by public authorities;
- Economic - increased active travel usage can lead to reduced congestion levels and improved accessibility in urban areas; and
- Social - increased provision for active travel modes can drive improved transport equity.

# 2 Design Guidance

## **2.1 National Cycle Manual (NCM)**

The National Cycle Manual (NCM) is a national guidance document to guide planners and engineers in their work to improve cycling provision in urban areas.

Cycling as a vulnerable mode of transport should be supported by a good design with principles of sustainable safety applied.

There are five principles, which should be followed in every design:

- **Functionality** – cycle facility design is fit for purpose and follows movement related functions and place related functions.
- **Homogeneity** – reduction in the relative speed, mass and directional differences of different road users sharing the same space.
- **Legibility** – self-evident, self-explanatory and self-enforcing road environment.
- **Forgivingness**
- **Self-awareness**

The NCM also notes that pedestrians are the most vulnerable road users and recognises the need for integration between the two to create a sustainable transport network. This is to be achieved through pedestrian priority to be reinforced by signage and cycling alignment and speed reduction measures.

## **2.2 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)**

DMURS provides guidance relating to the design of urban roads and streets. It outlines principles, approaches and standards that are necessary to achieve balanced, best practice design outcomes with regard to street networks and individual streets. This Manual sets out an integrated design approach influenced by the type of place in which the street is located and balance the needs of all users. It also aims to put well designed streets at the heart of sustainable communities creating physical, social and transport networks that promote real alternatives to car journeys, namely walking, cycling and public transport. The manual key design principles are as follows:

- To support the creation of integrated street networks, which promote higher levels of permeability and legibility for all users, and in particular more sustainable forms of transport;
- The promotion of multi-functional, place-based streets that balance the needs of all users within a self-regulating environment;
- The quality of the street is measured by the quality of the pedestrian environment; and
- Greater communication and co-operation between design professional through the promotion of a plan-led, multidisciplinary approach design.

### **2.3 Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA)**

As part of the requirement for an evidence-based approach to planning, as set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), an Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) is required to inform a Local Transport Plan (LTP) in order to guide the transport requirements for the future development of the area.

Published by the NTA in September 2021, the 'ABTA 'How To' Guide – Pilot Methodology' serves as the most relevant ABTA guidance document. The guidance is designed to inform the development of LTP's.

The key aims in the development of an ABTA are to:

- Maximise the opportunities for the integration of land use and transport planning by including the ABTA process as integral to the preparation of the Plan;
- Assess the existing traffic, transport and movement conditions within the Plan area and in its wider context;
- Plan for the efficient movement of people, goods and services within, to and from the Plan area;
- Identify the extent to which estimated transport demand associated with the emerging local development objectives can be supported and managed on the basis of existing transport assets;
- Identify the transport interventions required within the Plan area and in the wider context, to effectively accommodate the anticipated increase in demand; and
- Inform Site Specific Transport Assessments for development management applications.

The ABTA process is an iterative process consisting of:

- Part 1 – Baseline Assessment of Plan Area and the Surrounding Area;
- Part 2a – Establish Context for the ABTA (using tools such as SMART Analysis);
- Part 2b – Options Development;
- Part 3 – Options Assessment;
- Part 4 - Refinement & Sense Check the Proposals;
- Part 5 - Finalisation of the Plan; and
- Part 6 - Monitoring and Evaluation

The process aims to develop a desired network that is practically implementable and takes into account the existing physical, ecological, historical and socio-economic constraints within the study area. Through a process of sense checking and refinement as well with stakeholder consultation, an overall LTP for the study area will be generated.

This LTP will be cognisant of the existing sensitives and propose a viable network to encourage mode shift to sustainable modes whilst maintaining a level of service for vehicular traffic that local residents are accustomed to.