

## 5.1 Introduction

Transport is fundamental to how we live and work. The maintenance and delivery of an efficient, integrated and coherent transport network in line with national and regional policy is fundamental to the future economic, social and physical development of the County. Failure to facilitate efficient transport creates costs for society and acts as a barrier to economic growth. A key priority for this Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County.

National and regional transport policy recognises that current transport trends in Ireland and the Greater Dublin Area, in particular with regard to levels of car use, are unsustainable. A transition towards more sustainable modes of transport is essential to reduce Ireland's carbon emissions and reach the Government's goal of an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050.

While the emphasis in this chapter is to encourage this modal shift it is also important to recognise that some essential travel will continue to be made by cars and goods vehicles and the Plan also facilitates improvement in road infrastructure to cater for the required improved efficiencies.

## 5.2 Statutory Context

Legislation in the form of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) established the role of the National Transport Authority (NTA)<sup>1</sup> in the planning process for the GDA. Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) are to be consistent with the National Transport Authority's Transport Strategy as are Local Authority Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

## 5.3 Policy Context

There are a number of National and Regional policy documents which provide the basis for Meath's transportation strategy as follows:

### **National Planning Framework and National Development Plan- Project Ireland 2040**

The National Strategic Outcomes of Compact Growth (NSO 1), Enhanced Regional Accessibility (NSO 2), Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities (NSO 3), Sustainable Mobility (NSO 4) and Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Society (NSO 8) and a Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills (NSO 5) are all of relevance to this Movement Strategy.

The NPF focus is on the delivery of compact growth with the emphasis on an efficient public transport system thereby reducing reliance on the private car which will reduce emissions, improve air quality etc.

Implementing the Ireland 2040 Framework will be guided by targeting the following national strategic outcomes:

**Compact, Smart Growth:**

*'Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities and towns adds value and should create more attractive places for people to live and work in. All our cities and many rural towns contain large potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned, that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, amenities and services, but which need a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development, with investment in enabling infrastructure and supporting amenities, to realise their potential. Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development is a top priority.'*

**Enhanced Regional Accessibility:**

*'Once the core areas in key cities and urban areas have been mobilised, the next priority is to enhance accessibility between key urban centres of population and their regions such as the key cities of Cork and Limerick and through the Atlantic Economic Corridor to Galway as well as access to the larger urban centres in the North-West. Investment in connectivity first without urban consolidation measures will likely worsen the current trends towards sprawl.'*

**Sustainable Mobility:**

*'in line with Ireland's Climate Change mitigation plan, we need to progressively electrify our mobility systems moving away from polluting and carbon intensive propulsion systems to new technologies such as electric vehicles and introduction of electric and hybrid traction systems for public transport fleets, such that by 2040 our cities and towns will enjoy a cleaner, quieter environment free of combustion engine driven transport systems.'*

National Strategic Outcome 2 refers to enhanced regional accessibility. The N52 Ardee Bypass and the N2 Slane Bypass are projects listed as part of the programme of investment set out in the National Development Plan, and as illustrated by figure 5.2, aims to achieve the objective of enhanced regional connectivity.

A number of sections of the national road network will be progressed through pre-appraisal and early planning to prioritise projects which are proceeding to construction in the National Development Plan. These projects include: N3 Clonee to M50, N3 Virginia Bypass, N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross, N2 Ardee to south of Castleblayney and N2 Clontibret to the Border.

A number of local roads are listed in the NDP for progression over the life of the plan, one being, the Bettystown/Laytown Spine Road.

The NDP states that Local Authorities are planning to progress a wide range of regional and local roads projects across the country. These projects are at various stages of planning and appraisal. Examples of projects currently subject to appraisal include the R157 Maynooth Road, Dunboyne (safety upgrade) and the R162 Navan to Kingscourt road (safety upgrade).

**National Transport Authority - Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035**

This Transport Strategy provides a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services in the Greater Dublin Area over the next two decades. The strategy has identified that since the 1990's car ownership in Meath has consistently risen even through the recession years and is now reaching saturation point. Cycling mode share in the County is low. The strategy emphasises the need for additional walking and cycling infrastructure in the region and outlines the improvements required to achieve this. The NTA's Transportation Strategy is required by legislation to be consistent with the RSES.

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

The National Development Plan 2018 - 2027 (NDP) sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the implementation of the National Planning Framework, through a total investment of approximately €116 billion. This level of capital spending will provide clarity to the construction sector, allowing the industry to provide the capacity and capability required to deliver Government's long-term investment plans. With Enhanced Regional Accessibility a National Strategic Outcome, the Plan outlines the national road network projects which will be provided with investment. This includes the N2/A5 road, serving Meath, Monaghan and Donegal and the N2 Slane Bypass.

**Planning Land Use and Transport – Outlook 2040**

Transport investment must have due regard for the Project Ireland 2040 National Strategic Outcomes, particularly those which are most relevant to the transport sector, such as enhanced regional accessibility and sustainable mobility.

To ensure a consistency of approach across Government in relation to Project Ireland 2040, Planning Land Use and Transport: Outlook 2040 sets out a framework for future transport investment. This document will replace Transport Future – A Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport (SIFLT) and will ensure a joined-up approach to planning across Government.

**Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government 2012)**

These guidelines set out planning policy considerations relating to development affecting national primary and secondary roads, including motorways and associated junctions, outside the 50-60 kmph speed limit zones for cities, towns and villages.

**Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland, 2009-2020 (Department of Transport)**

This strategy aims to deliver a sustainable transport system which is fundamental to the climate change agenda. The Government reaffirms its vision for sustainability in transport and sets out five key goals: (i) reduce overall travel demand, (ii) maximise the efficiency of the transport network, (iii) reduce reliance on fossil fuels, (iv) reduce transport emissions and (v) improve accessibility to transport and thus improve our quality of life. This plan currently remains in place though it is likely to be reviewed during the lifetime of the County Development Plan.

**National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020 (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)**

The National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) 2009-2020, uses the targets outlined in Smarter Travel and focuses more specifically on cycling as a sustainable transport mode. The document sets out the stated aim of creating a strong cycling culture in Ireland making cycling the norm, rather than an exception, for all short trips undertaken.

**Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan 2014-2024**

This document focuses on establishing an inventory of cycling facilities in Dublin, Kildare, Meath and Wicklow and identifies potential cycle routes such as greenways, cycle paths, cycle lanes, and roads. The plan sets out a ten year strategy to guide investment into cycling in the GDA and seeks to increase the regions cycle network fivefold in length to 2,840km.

**Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2019 (DMURS), (Department of Transport and the Department of Environment)**

The focus of the manual is to create streets that are safe, attractive and comfortable for all users. It presents a series of principles, approaches and standards that are necessary to achieve balanced, best practice design outcomes with regard to street networks and individual streets. Well-designed streets can create connected physical, social and transport networks that promote real alternatives to car journeys, namely walking, cycling or public transport. The manual gives guidance on the layout of new developments and on the design of individual roads and streets taking into account streetscapes, urban design as well as engineering criteria. Where relevant, the manual must be implemented by all Planning Authorities when permitting or planning development.

**National Cycle Manual 2011 (National Transport Authority)**

This offers guidance on integrating cycling infrastructure into the design of urban areas. The manual challenges planners and engineers to incorporate cycling within transport networks more proactively than before.

**Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2018 (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government)**

This includes standards for car parking.

**National Disability Inclusion Strategy (2017-2021)**

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2021 is the key framework outlining the policies and actions needed to address the needs of people with disabilities. This Inclusion Strategy is the outcome of a broad and comprehensive consultation process that has resulted in key actions under a range of themes to ensure persons with disabilities are recognised and treated equally before the law.

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).**

The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) states that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

This requires change from viewing people with disabilities as receivers of charity, medical treatment, and social protection to viewing people with disabilities as having rights, who are capable of claiming those rights, can participate fully in all aspects of life and who are capable of making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent. Accessibility is one of the key rights of persons with a disability so that they can live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. The UNCRPD puts obligations on State Parties to ensure access for persons with disabilities to, inter alia, the physical environment and transportation in both urban and rural areas.

#### **DMURS Interim Advice Note – Covid-19 Pandemic Response**

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) announced funding for technical and financial support to deliver improved walking and cycling infrastructure across the country. This entails technical and financial support to review current street arrangements, including the widening of footpaths, potential pedestrianisation of some streets, potential one-way systems, altering traffic signal times and provision of some external space where appropriate to support business activities. This Interim Advice Note provides guidance to Local Authorities to assist in the implementation of these measures and advises that Local Authorities, when considering Covid-19 related measures, also consider the longer term alignment with the principles, approaches and measures contained within the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets which prioritises sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling and public transport), advocates a multi-disciplinary approach to street design and promotes the principles of universal design.

#### **Local Link Rural Transport Programme Strategic Plan 2018 to 2022**

This is the National Transport Authority's first strategic plan for the Local Link Rural Transport Programme and covers the period 2018 to 2022. The key priorities of the Programme continue to include addressing rural social exclusion and the integration of rural transport services with other public transport services. The Programme mission statement is 'to provide a quality nationwide community based public transport system in rural Ireland which responds to local needs'

#### **National Aviation Policy for Ireland 2015 (Department of Transport)**

This document serves as a general guidance document for the development of aviation within the Country. It highlights three principal goals for the Irish aviation sector:

- To enhance Ireland's connectivity by ensuring safe, secure and competitive access, responsive to the needs of business, tourism and consumers;
- To foster the growth of aviation enterprise in Ireland to support job creation and position Ireland as a recognised global leader in aviation; and,
- To maximise the contribution of the aviation sector to Ireland's economic growth and development.

**Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, 2019-2031**

Regional Policy Objective RPO 6 Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning seeks to: 'Promote best use of Transport Infrastructure, existing and planned, and promote sustainable and active modes of travel to ensure the proper integration of transportation and land use planning.'

The RSES acknowledges that transport as a sector is one of the significant contributors to our national Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and as a nation we need to act on climate change and adapt and mitigate all sectors accordingly. The need to transition to a low carbon society by reducing transport usage and transitions to lower carbon options, including transition to clean renewables is a key aspect of Ireland's response to climate change. Transition to a low carbon transport system is firstly about reducing the need for travel and then shifting to economically efficient modes, i.e. active travel modes and public transport. Transitioning existing fossil fuel vehicles to clean renewable vehicles is a vital further step.

The NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) provides a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services over the period 2016 - 2035.

The following RPOs are relevant:

**RPO 8.1:**

'The integration of transport and land use planning in the Region shall be consistent with the guiding principles expressed in the transport strategy of the RSES.'

**RPO 8.2:**

'The capacity and safety of the Region's strategic land transport networks will be managed and enhanced, including through the management of travel demand in order to ensure their optimal use.'

**RPO 8.3:**

'That future development is planned and designed in a manner which maximises the efficiency and protects the strategic capacity of the metropolitan area transport network, both existing and planned and to protect and maintain regional accessibility.'

**RPO 8.4:**

'Land use plans within the GDA shall demonstrate a consistency with the NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area and plans with or outside of the GDA shall be consistent with the guiding principles expressed in the RSES.'

**RPO 8.5:**

'To support the preparation of a regional strategy for freight transport in collaboration with the relevant transport agencies and the other Assemblies.'

**RPO 8.6:**

‘In order to give local expression to the regional level Transport Strategy within the Region in conjunction with the NTA, Local Transport Plans (LTP) will be prepared for selected settlements in the Region.’ The settlements for which Local Transport Plans will be made will include, but will not be limited to, Athlone, Dundalk, Drogheda, Arklow, Ashbourne, Balbriggan, Longford, Mullingar, Portlaoise, , Naas, Navan, Newbridge, Tullamore, and Wicklow-Rathnew and certain large settlements or development areas within the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

**RPO 8.7:**

‘To promote the use of mobility management and travel plans to bring about behaviour change and more sustainable transport use.’

**RPO 8.8:**

‘The RSES supports delivery of the rail projects set out in Table 8.2, subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.’

These projects include:

- Re-appraisal of the extension of the Dunboyne/M3 Parkway line to Navan during the Mid Term Review of the GDA Transport Strategy;<sup>2</sup>
- Dart expansion Programme - new infrastructure and electrification of existing lines, including provision of electrified services to Drogheda, Maynooth and M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo Line.

**RPO 8.9:**

‘The RSES supports delivery of the bus projects set out in Table 8.3 subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.’

Table 8.3 includes a broad range of measures addressing all aspects of bus transport including routes, fare structures, passage information etc.

**RPO 8.10:**

‘The RSES supports appraisal and or delivery of the road projects set out in Table 8.4 subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.’

These projects include:

- N2 Slane Bypass;
- N2 Rath roundabout to Kilmoon;
- N2 Ardee Bypass;
- N2 Ardee to Castleblayney;
- N3 Clonee to M50
- M4 Maynooth to Leixlip.

In addition, long term protection shall remain for the Eastern Bypass and the Leinster Outer Orbital Route.

**RPO 8.11:**

‘Support the improvement, and protection, of the EU TEN-T network and the strategic function of the Dublin to Belfast road network.’

**RPO 8.12:**

‘Support the delivery of a higher speed rail connection between Belfast and Dublin and Cork.’

**RPO 8.13:**

‘Support the Local Link Rural Transport Programme throughout rural areas of the Region.’

**RPO 8.14:**

‘The RSES supports delivery of the strategic park and ride projects set out in Table 8.5 subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the outcome of the planning process.’ These projects include Dunboyne.

In terms of cycling the RSES focuses on implementation of the NTA Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, delivery of the National Cycle Plan, provide safe cycling routes in towns and villages across the Region, enhance pedestrian facilities in all urban areas in the Region; and investment priorities for cycleways feasibility and route selection studies for cycleways shall identify and subsequently avoid high sensitivity feeding or nesting points for birds and other sensitive fauna.

The RSES sets out the following in respect of air transport:

**RPO 8.17:**

‘Support the National Aviation Policy for Ireland and the growth of movements and passengers at Dublin Airport to include its status as a secondary hub airport. In particular, support the provision of a second runway, improved terminal facilities and other infrastructure.’

**RPO 8.18:**

‘Improved access to Dublin Airport is supported, including Metrolink and improved bus services as part of BusConnects, connections from the road network from the west and north. Improve cycle access to Dublin Airport and surrounding employment locations. Support appropriate levels of car parking and car hire parking.’

**RPO 8.19:**

‘Spatial planning policies in the vicinity of the airport shall protect the operation of Dublin Airport in respect to its growth and the safe navigation of aircraft from non-compatible land uses. Policies shall recognise and reflect the airport noise zones associated with Dublin Airport. Within the Inner Airport Noise Zone, provision of new residential and/or other noise sensitive development shall be actively resisted. Within the Outer Noise Zone, provision of new residential and/or other noise sensitive development shall be strictly controlled and require appropriate levels of noise insulation in all cases.’



**RPO 8.20:**

‘Spatial planning policies for areas located within the Public Safety Zones shall reflect the guidance set out in the ERM Report “Public Safety Zones, 2005” (or any update thereof) commissioned by the then Department of Transport and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, in assessing proposals for development falling within Airport Public Safety Zones.’

## 5.4 Vision for Movement Strategy

It is a strategic aim of this Development Plan to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing factor for travel demand<sup>3</sup>. It is the Vision of this Plan is to use the resources at the Council’s disposal to provide safe, efficient and accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims. Maintaining and improving transport networks remains a priority, particularly in relation to the delivery of important infrastructural development and transport measures which support the economic development strategy for the County. Achieving sustainable patterns of transport in accordance with national and regional policy as set out in Section 5.3 will enable settlements to function more efficiently and effectively.

## 5.5 Integration of Land Use and Transportation Planning

Land use planning can proactively influence travel behaviour; clustering of development coupled with improvements in street layouts, design and effective planning process can strongly influence how people make their daily journeys. Research has shown that travel by non-motorised modes is highest in pleasant ‘liveable’ streets in areas of good permeability with direct access to public transport. It is a key priority of the National Planning Framework (NPF) to achieve effective density and consolidation rather than urban sprawl and thus improve mobilisation of core urban areas to achieve enhanced connectivity between regions. It is stated within the NPF that achieving effective density within centrally located urban areas and urban consolidation measures rather than more sprawl of urban development is a priority<sup>4</sup>. It is advocated within the NPF that these measures will be delivered in accordance with the NTA Strategy for the GDA 2016-2035. Consequently, it is therefore the policy of the Council to continue to support effective integration of land-use and transportation in order to generate and reinforce sustainable patterns of development in the County that reduce the need to travel by car. This policy focus is intended to, not only reflect the policy position as outlined in the NPF, and critically to take cognisance of the objectives of ‘Ireland’s Climate Change Strategy to 2020 and beyond’.

It is a policy of the Council:

**MOV POL 1**

To support and facilitate the integration of land use with transportation infrastructure, through the development of sustainable compact settlements which are well served by public transport, in line with the guiding principles outlined in RPO 8.1 of the EMRA RSES 2019-2031.

**MOV POL 2**

To carry out strategic studies to identify and set out the delivery mechanisms for the necessary transport infrastructure to implement the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath.

**MOV POL 3**

To promote sustainable land use planning measures which facilitate transportation efficiency, economic returns on transport investment, minimisation of environmental impacts and a general shift towards the greater use of public transportation throughout the County.

**MOV POL 4**

To promote higher residential development densities in settlement centres along public transport corridors, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria.

It is the objective of the Council:

**MOV OBJ 1**

To prepare and commence implementation of Local Transport Plans (LTP), in conjunction with the NTA and relevant stakeholders, for Drogheda (in conjunction with Louth County Council as part of the Joint Urban Plan), Ashbourne, Navan, Ratoath, and other settlements where Local Area Plans are undertaken, having regard to the Area Based Transport Assessment Guidance Notes (2019).

**MOV OBJ 2**

To seek regular engagement between Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the relevant Municipal District regarding road safety issues communities located on Meath's national roads.

## 5.5.1 Demand Management

The NTA's Transport Strategy envisages that there will be limited provision of new road capacity in the Greater Dublin Area up to 2030. While investment in public transport networks will free up road space, the forecast for growth in population and employment will negatively affect congestion in the Greater Dublin Area. The NTA acknowledge that, even with all of the planned improvements aimed at reducing the dependency on car travel, it will not be possible to meet the targets in the Smarter Travel Policy without significant demand management measures of a fiscal nature.

Management of demand for road use is broadly grouped into three categories:

- Control measures where access to, and use of, the road infrastructure or on and off street parking spaces is controlled e.g. on street parking controls, ramp metering, dedication of

road space to certain transport modes, better development management to reduce demand and need to travel,

- Fiscal measures where pricing mechanisms are utilized to achieve road usage modification,
- Other complementary measures used in combination with 1 and 2 above e.g. mobility management plans, car clubs, lift sharing, marketing and promotion of non-car modes of transport.

The Strategy aims to provide an efficient and effective transport system across the region and to accommodate future travel growth in a managed and balanced way. Increased public transport provision, coupled with enhanced cycling and walking facilities in the urban areas, will provide the means to cater for much of the increased travel demand. However, without complementary demand management measures the full benefits of the Strategy will not be achieved.

Accordingly the Plan will support the NTA in its prioritisation of the following:

- Encourage land use policies which support the provision of development in locations and at densities which enable the efficient provision of public transport services;
- Set maximum parking standards<sup>5</sup> for all new developments, with the level of parking provision applied being based on the level of public transport accessibility;
- Reduce the availability of workplace parking in urban centres to discourage car commuting, where alternative transport options are available;
- Implement, at the appropriate time, demand management measures to address congestion issues on the radial national routes approaching the M50 motorway, to ensure that these routes retain sufficient capacity to fulfil their wider strategic functions;
- Secure the introduction or expansion of on-street parking controls, and charging structures, that seek to reduce commuter parking and which contribute to greater parking turnover for non-commuting purposes;
- Support and facilitate the implementation and expansion of:
  1. Workplace Travel Plans for all large employers<sup>6</sup>;
  2. Tailored travel planning information provision for residential and commercial/retail areas;
  3. Travel Plans for schools, colleges and all education campuses; and
  4. Car club schemes, car-pooling and car sharing.

## 5.6 Strategic Infrastructure

### 5.6.1 Challenges

A significant gap still remains between the allocation of funding for transport proposals and the minimum funding requirements to maintain the condition of existing transport systems in adequate condition. Such restricted funding levels limits scope for network improvements and capacity increases. The challenge now faced by the Local Authorities is securing increased investment levels in the future and ensuring that a strategic focus is maintained as to where and how investment is directed and utilised. Since the onset of Covid 19, the Irish economy is facing an uncertain future. For the transportation system, this brings with it challenges and opportunities. In the absence of knowledge on the future path of Covid 19, the consequent economic uncertainty and a potential reduction in the use of public transport, arising from lifestyle adjustments to control the virus. All transport investment must be focused and prioritised to secure the most advantageous outcome. Given the likelihood of a continuing upward trend in traffic congestion and as outlined in the NPF, EMRA RSES and the NTA Transport Strategy, the focus will remain on improved accessibility within urban areas and on strategic regional routes and corridors to plan for an efficient transport system beyond Covid 19.

### 5.6.2 Key Principles

The following are considered to constitute the key principles underlying future investment in land transport networks:

1. Funding should focus on the maintenance and renewal of identified strategically important elements of the existing land transport system, so as to protect earlier investment and maintain essential functioning.
2. Inclusion of measures to address current and future urban congestion is considered essential.
3. Inclusion of measures to improve the efficiency and sustainability of urban transport including improved and expanded public transport; capacity and walking and cycling infrastructure, improved traffic management and bus priority; and better use of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), where appropriate.
4. Any further investment should be targeted to maximise the contribution of land transport networks by enhancing the efficiency of the existing network, particularly through increased use of ITS applications or through investments that improve connections to key seaports and airports or support other identified national and regional spatial planning priorities, where appropriate.
5. In the case of roads, investment should provide access to poorly served regions, promote access for large-scale employment proposals and complete missing links or address critical bottlenecks and safety issues, including those in Slane.

6. Secure implementation of transport projects supported by national and regional spatial planning policies, along with other demand management measures where appropriate.

It is the goal of this Plan to ensure that future transport investment, as governed by these principles, will seek to maintain and improve the quality of life of citizens and be consistent with environmental, climate and biodiversity objectives, imperatives and obligations, including those arising from the EU Habitats Directive.

## 5.7 Sustainable Transport

The promotion of use and increased delivery of sustainable modes of transport is fundamental to achieving Ireland's carbon emission reduction requirements of 30% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. In addition to the reduction of emissions, failure to deliver public transport investment will result in a highly congested network that cannot meet the economy's transport needs. 'The provision of a well-functioning, integrated public transport system, enhancing competitiveness, sustaining economic progress and enabling sustainable mobility choices for citizens supports the overall objectives of Ireland 2040'.<sup>7</sup> Given the current funding constraints in major transport investment programmes additional public transport capacity requirements for the GDA area must be met in the medium to long term through investment in lower-cost alternatives. The Plan will seek to support and facilitate an increase in modal share for cycling and increases in the use of the bus network in the County. Emphasis will also be placed on supporting the delivery of the rail line to Navan in accordance with the Transport Strategy for the GDA 2016-2035.

### 5.7.1 Modal Changes

The Council engaged with the NTA to develop modal share targets for the promotion of measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns across the County. Further information on modal targets are outlined in the Volume 2 Written Statements for Settlements.

The modal share targets have been informed by the Census 2016 POWSCAR Data and an assessment by the Transportation Department of Meath County Council and the NTA of achievable modal share targets for 2026.

From the Census 2016 POWSCAR Data, the following information on settlements within County Meath was noted:

<b>Highest levels for Walking:</b>	Kells/Ratoath 19%
<b>Highest levels for Cycling:</b>	Maynooth 3%

<b>Highest levels of Bus Use:</b>	Duleek 20%
<b>Highest levels of Rail Use:</b>	Maynooth 12%
<b>Highest levels of Car Use:</b>	Kilcock 74%
<b>Highest Combined Public Transport:</b>	Laytown 26%

Conversely, the following statistics were also observed:

<b>Lowest Walking:</b>	Maynooth 2%
<b>Lowest Cycling:</b>	Kilcock 0%
<b>Lowest Bus:</b>	Maynooth 6%
<b>Lowest Rail:</b>	Ashbourne/Kells/Navan 0%
<b>Lowest Car Usage:</b>	Dunboyne/Enfield 59%
<b>Lowest Combined Public Transport:</b>	Navan 11%

The potential for growth in bus patronage is greatest in Navan where the Council and the NTA are working to deliver major bus improvement works as part of the Navan 2030 project.

Notwithstanding this, it is considered that there is limited scope for growth in rail users over the life of the plan (although this is a key aim of Meath County Council in the medium to longer term) and the benefits from the electrification of the lines to Drogheda, the M3 parkway and introduction of DART services will not be realised until post 2027. While it remains the policy of the Council to promote, facilitate and advance the delivery of Phase II of the Navan railway line project and associated rail services in cooperation with other relevant agencies, no account of the potential benefits of this project could be taken for this study.

### 5.7.3 Rail

At present, rail services are available at stations located in Dunboyne, Pace (M3 Parkway), Enfield, Laytown and a limited service provided from Gormanston. There are rail stations located immediately adjoining the County which are also used by Meath residents – Maynooth, Kilcock, Clonsilla, Drogheda and Balbriggan. The Short Hop Zone (SHZ) rail prices operated by Irish Rail currently operate as far as Balbriggan and Kilcock. Given the close proximity of a number of train stations in County Meath, i.e. Laytown, Gormanston and Enfield, the pricing discrepancy is having an undesirable impact on user behaviour. It is diverting rail users to a considerable extent to utilise

stations outside of the County in order to avail of cheaper fares thereby creating more congestion at certain locations. This is not a sustainable model and with population growth continuing in County Meath, the problem is certain to be further exacerbated in the future. Meath County Council is committed to working with Irish Rail to review the operation of the Short Hop Zone (SHZ) rail prices and encourage an extension of same to stations in Laytown, Gormanston and Enfield.

The Council recognises cycling and walking to be healthy, safe, ecologically-sound and socially-just forms of movement. Walking and cycling are the most sustainable modes of transport available in terms of their positive impacts on the environment. The NTA's strategy for Transport in the GDA emphasises the need for additional walking and cycling infrastructure in the region and outlines a number of improvements required to encourage more people to walk which includes improvements to the existing environment for people with mobility, visual and hearing impairments.

Planning policy can encourage walking to become the principal method of movement for shorter journeys through the arrangement of land uses and by utilising good urban design. Providing a comprehensive network of safe, well-lit and convenient footpaths (both road-side and segregated) within new residential areas with links to schools, local neighbourhood centres, public transport stops and workplaces will encourage people to walk more. The Council will continue to improve walking facilities in the County in conjunction with the NTA.

As a consequence of the ambitious objectives outlined in the National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) which seeks 10% of all journeys in 2020 to be taken by bicycle, the NTA commissioned the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan. This document outlines existing and required cycling infrastructure in both urban and rural areas of the region. Information outlined in that report will provide for cycle infrastructure projects to be prioritised in terms of the importance to the strategic network and the likely cycle demand for such a scheme. The Network Plan has provided Local Authorities with an evidence-based strategy for the implementation of cycle infrastructure that will see tangible returns for investment.

The fundamental issue arising from the NCPF in relation to the County is the overall fragmentation of the existing cycle network. Poor linkages within towns are common place as is the absence of any network linkages between urban centres. The NCPF identified potential linkages in the network and particularly mentioned the potential to link Ashbourne, Ratoath and Dunshaughlin as a cluster.

While the Council has been successful in the delivery of improvements to the cycle network in recent years, it will continue efforts to make improvements in this area in accordance with the recommendations of the NCPF.

The Council has enjoyed a successful roll out of the Greenway programme in the County with the success of the Boyne Greenway and the construction of the Royal Canal Greenway which should be completed in 2019 and remains a priority for Government<sup>12</sup>. The Council will continue its efforts in the delivery of further greenway facilities in the County including all future phases of the Boyne Greenway subject to obtaining relevant consents and further phases of the Royal Canal

Greenway which forms part of the Eurovelo Route in Europe<sup>13</sup>. Significant progress has been made on the Boyne Greenway with funding secured under the National and Regional Greenway Fund to enable the advancement of plans for the Navan to Newgrange section. The Council has the opportunity to work in conjunction with Fingal and Louth County Council in relation to Joint proposals to develop a cycle route between Newgrange and Newbridge House, Donabate.

The RSES recognises that there is potential for a coast to coast network of national greenways, including the Royal and Grand Canals and the Barrow Way, with regional water-based trails along the Old Rail Trail Greenway, and the Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway on the old Kingscourt line. Meath County Council has applied to the Department of Transport for funding for the advancement of the Lakelands Greenway (Navan – Kingscourt)<sup>14</sup> which will form part of the northern greenway extending into Counties Cavan, Monaghan and Louth.

Cross border greenway projects are recognised within the NPF as an opportunity to maximise market exposure from a tourism perspective and the provision of a North – South long-distance cycling route is supported within this document. The Council will seek to support the delivery of a North – South Greenway in conjunction with neighbouring Local Authorities and those within Northern Ireland. The Strategy for the future development of National and Regional Greenways was launched in July 2018. The RSES includes an objective to support the extension of the Boyne Greenway to include Navan to promote sustainable transport choices and as a recreation asset for the town.

At present, rail services are available at stations located in Dunboyne, Pace (M3 Parkway), Enfield, Laytown and a limited service provided from Gormanston. There are rail stations located immediately adjoining the County which are also used by Meath residents – Maynooth, Kilcock, Clonsilla, Drogheda and Balbriggan. The Short Hop Zone (SHZ) rail prices operated by Irish Rail currently operate as far as Balbriggan and Kilcock. Given the close proximity of a number of train stations in County Meath, i.e. Laytown, Gormanston and Enfield, the pricing discrepancy is having an undesirable impact on user behaviour. It is diverting rail users to a considerable extent to utilise stations outside of the County in order to avail of cheaper fares thereby creating more congestion at certain locations. This is not a sustainable model and with population growth continuing in County Meath, the problem is certain to be further exacerbated in the future. Meath County Council is committed to working with Irish Rail to review the operation of the Short Hop Zone (SHZ) rail prices and encourage an extension of same to stations in Laytown, Gormanston and Enfield.

### MOV OBJ 3

To ensure that design for cycle infrastructure for all relevant developments shall be carried out in accordance with the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, other relevant design standards or any successors to these documents.

## 5.7.2 Cycling & Walking

It is a priority of the National Development Plan to provide fast, high-frequency electrified services to Drogheda on the Northern Line which stops at Gormanston and Laytown Stations in the County and to M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo Line. As part of the DART expansion works to Drogheda



through the planned electrification of the Northern rail line and the associated upgrades to the rail network it is considered there is an opportunity to include a new railway station at Bettystown to improve access to rail services for residents of Bettystown and to encourage more sustainable travel patterns in the East Meath area. This Plan supports the prioritisation of these projects and will continue to support TII in the roll out of rail improvements and upgrades throughout the County.<sup>8</sup> The Council would also support the delivery of a further rail station in the Northern Environs of Drogheda, given the designation of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre.

The provision of a rail line from Pace (M3 Parkway) to Navan is a critical component of the Council's vision for the county while facilitating the development of Navan as a key town, as designated in the RSES.

Strong population growth in recent years and under-investment in public transport services within the County has led to unsustainable levels of outbound commuting by way of private car usage. Recognising the unsustainability of these commuting patterns, the Council is fully committed to the advancement of a rail line which will result in significant economic stimulus, carbon emissions reductions and societal benefits for citizens of the county. When delivered, the Dunboyne/ M3 Parkway-Navan Rail Line will comprise an electrified rail line, through the Dart + Programme, which will transform the county and provide sustainable links to the Greater Dublin Area.

The delivery of Dunboyne/M3 Parkway-Navan Rail Line is supported at a regional level in the Eastern and Midlands RSES which includes an objective 'to support the delivery of a number of rail projects including the re-appraisal of the extension of the Dunboyne/M3 Parkway line to Navan during the Mid Term Review of the GDA Transport Strategy.' The commencement of the aforementioned appraisal is now underway and the results of this will inform the mid-term review of the GDA Transport Strategy.

The Council note that the absence of a rail service from Navan to Dublin places the town and wider county at a competitive disadvantage to the other twelve administrative capitals within the region. The delivery of this critical infrastructure will serve to strengthen the transport links in the County and will significantly improve the County's economic competitiveness, while having a meaningful improvement on the quality of life of the County's residents. It is therefore imperative that the delivery of the rail line is included in the next GDA Transport Strategy and subsequent Capital Infrastructure Programme in order to ensure investment can be secured to achieve these public transport improvements and consequent carbon emission reduction targets for the County. Though the re- appraisal will be conducted by the NTA, the Council will actively participate in this appraisal to ensure the assessment is rigorous in its consideration of all relevant matters pertaining to the County's need for a rail line.

Considerable efforts have been undertaken in the past decade which has included the substantial completion of the Railway Order application for Dunboyne/M3 Parkway line to Navan and the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement and Natura 2000 Appropriate Assessment in 2011. This route maintained an alignment largely in keeping with the historic Navan – Dublin rail route and was selected as the preferred option after extensive consultations were undertaken by Irish Rail with Meath County Council and all relevant stakeholders.

Notwithstanding this progress, the advancement of the project has faced delays as the Transport Strategy for the GDA 2016-2035 states that ‘based on current population and employment forecasts, the level of travel demand between Navan, Dunshaughlin and various stations to the city centre is considered insufficient to justify the development of a high-capacity rail link at this time. It is intended that, as part of the next Strategy review, the likely future usage of a rail connection to Navan will be reassessed, taking into account the level of development that will have taken place over the next six years in Navan and Dunshaughlin and their environs. Pending that review, the corridor previously identified for a rail link to Navan should be protected from development intrusion’<sup>9</sup>.

Notwithstanding the re-appraisal outcome, this Plan maintains a strong policy stance to ensure that the detailed designed alignment is protected from further development, and that this protection also extends to potential stations and park and ride sites along the route. The Plan will also ensure, through the inclusion of a specific zoning objective R1 Rail Corridor which seeks ‘to provide for a strategic rail corridor and associated physical infrastructure’ that the design route of Dunboyne/M3 Parkway rail line to Navan (as confirmed by the NTA) will be not be compromised. Furthermore, this Plan advocates a rail solution that will best serve the county and would therefore support the completion of a route option study to confirm the most optimal route, once the principal of the rail line has been established. Finally, the Council will continue to be actively and strongly pursue the advancement of the rail line to appraisal and beyond, having regard to the wide-ranging long-term benefits of the project.

It is the policy of the Council:

#### **MOV POL 5**

To support the extension of the rail network in the County and to actively and strongly pursue a rail line from Dunboyne/M3 Parkway to Navan subject to proper planning and environmental considerations.

#### **MOV POL 6**

To actively pursue, in conjunction with Irish Rail and the NTA, the re- appraisal of the extension of the Dunboyne/M3 Parkway line to Navan during the Mid-Term review of the GDA Transport Strategy in accordance with the precepts of the RSES<sup>10</sup>.

#### **MOV POL 7**

To support the reappraisal and thereafter, promote, facilitate and advance the Dunboyne /M3 Parkway line to Navan railway line project and associated rail services in cooperation with other relevant agencies.

It is the objective of the Council:

#### **MOV OBJ 4**

To improve, in conjunction with the NTA and Irish Rail, facilities at existing stations.

**MOV OBJ 5**

(a) To protect and safeguard the detailed designed alignment of Phase II of the Navan rail route and surrounding lands (including identified station locations), as illustrated on Map Series No. 5.1 in Volume 3, free from development and any encroachment by inappropriate uses which could compromise its future development as a rail facility, prior to the reappraisal of the project as part of Mid Term Review of the GDA Transport Strategy in accordance with the precepts of the RSES. (b) As part of the future planning of the Dunboyne/ M3 Parkway line to Navan, the possibility of a spur serving Ashbourne and Ratoath should be explored subject to compliance with national policy and the Railway Order.

**MOV OBJ 6**

To facilitate and encourage the upgrading of existing railway stations, and protect, as required, lands necessary for the upgrading of existing railway lines or stations or the provision of new railway stations throughout the County.

**MOV OBJ 7**

To facilitate the provision of a train station at Bettystown (in addition to the existing station at Laytown) as part of the DART expansion works to Drogheda through the planned electrification of the Northern rail line by Irish Rail.

**MOV OBJ 8**

To encourage, support and work in conjunction with Irish Rail to review the operation of the Short Hop Zone (SHZ) rail prices with an extension to stations in Laytown, Gormanston Enfield and Drogheda.

**MOV OBJ 9**

To support the delivery of an additional train station in the Northern Environs of Drogheda as part of the future Joint Urban Plan.

**MOV OBJ 10**

To explore the feasibility of a train station in conjunction with Irish Rail and Louth County Council as part of the Joint Urban Area Plan.

## 5.7.4 Bus

There have been significant improvements to the quality and frequency of bus services to and from the urban centres of the County to Dublin and to other regional centres. Bus Éireann currently operates Commuter and/or Expressway services to and from all major employment centres in the County to Dublin. The high level of service also reflects the fact that other national expressway services to the North West and West are routed through the County. Bus Éireann also provides public transport services linking population centres in the County and adjoining counties such as Drogheda to Navan, Navan to Kells and Navan to Trim. Bus Éireann's commuter network into Dublin City Centre is constantly evolving and improving to meet the changing demographic profile of the Greater Dublin Area. A number of private services including Ashbourne Connects, Collins, and Matthews Coaches which serves the population centres in East Meath, are also in operation and play an important role in meeting the overall demand for transport services. These compete with, and complement, the existing public transport provisions of Bus Éireann. Bus

Éireann also provide a local bus service in Navan. National bus routes are complemented by Dublin Bus in Clonee and Dunboyne.

Notwithstanding this high level of service, in the context of restricted investment in future major transport infrastructure, the NTA as part of the transport strategy for the GDA has undertaken a number of studies which have identified those routes where demand for travel necessitates significant levels of investment in order to minimise delays. Improvements will include, enhanced bus lane provision on these corridors, removing current delays on the bus network in the relevant locations and enabling bus services to provide a faster alternative to car traffic along these routes.

Arising from this analysis a Core Bus Network was identified which comprises sixteen radial bus corridors, three orbital bus corridors and six regional bus corridors, three of which pass through County Meath and include;

1. M1, via Dublin Port Tunnel
  - Serves long-distance bus routes from Belfast, Dundalk, Derry, Monaghan and Drogheda; and
  - Serves other regional bus routes from Balbriggan, Skerries and East Meath.
2. M2, via Dublin Port Tunnel
  - Serves regional bus routes from Ashbourne and Slane.
3. M3/N3, via Navan Road
  - Serves regional bus routes from Cavan, Navan, Trim and Dunshaughlin.

Given the funding restrictions on major transport programmes the NTA are recommending that improvements to the Quality Bus Corridor network are prioritised and implemented. Projects specific to the County proposed under the NTA's Transport Strategy for the GDA 2016-2035 include:

- Enhanced bus service along the M3/N3
- The provision of a bus hub in Navan
- Enhancement of bus services on the N2

Investment will also be made available for the maintenance of the existing bus network outside of the core bus network identified by the NTA, including the provision of bus priority measures at locations where delays are reducing efficiency. Funding will also be made available for a variety of bus infrastructure improvements in relation to bus stops, travel information and bus shelters.

There has been an increased frequency of local bus services largely as a result of the establishment of Louth Meath Fingal Local Link. Louth Meath Fingal Local Link run a daily route between Trim and Navan to assist passengers who wish to access education, training or employment. Regular weekly services run between a number of towns and villages while Dial-A-Ride services are available from a number of centres. The improvement in public transport between larger towns and between villages and towns is of paramount importance to reduce isolation and improve linkages between the towns, villages and their hinterlands.

It is the policy of the Council to:

**MOV POL 8**

To cooperate with the NTA and other relevant agencies to have ongoing reviews of the network of bus routes in Meath, and to support and encourage public transport operators to provide improved bus services in, and through the County.

**MOV POL 9**

To ensure that the design and planning of transport infrastructure and services accords with the principles of sustainable safety, in order that the widest spectrum of needs, including pedestrians, cyclists, the ageing population and those with mobility impairments are taken into account.

**MOV POL 10**

To ensure that new developments in Regional Growth Centres, Key Towns, Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns are laid out so as to facilitate the provision of local bus services and the provision of Park and Ride facilities as appropriate.

**MOV POL 11**

To facilitate in conjunction with relevant statutory agencies alternative transport modes to the private car, including enhanced delivery of public transport services along regional corridors (as defined in the NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035); frequent local bus services linking residential areas to District Centres and Town Centres, and which also serve shopping areas, employment areas and other activity centres, and connecting to key transport interchange points.

**MOV POL 12**

To support the implementation of recommendations presented in the NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 and any subsequent reviews thereof.

To ensure that design for cycle infrastructure for all relevant developments shall be carried out in accordance with the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, other relevant design standards or any successors to these documents.

**MOV OBJ 11**

To provide bus priority measures on existing and planned road infrastructure, where appropriate, in collaboration with the NTA, Bus Éireann and TII<sup>11</sup> (where relevant).

**MOV OBJ 12**

To identify deficits in bus infrastructure and develop a priority list as a basis to secure funding for improvement works, including the provision of bus shelters, bus stops and travel information at stops.

**MOV OBJ 13**

To require Mobility Management Plans and Traffic and Transport Assessments for proposed trip intensive developments, as appropriate. Please refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives.

**MOV OBJ 14**

To deliver, in conjunction with the NTA and the Department of Transport, a Public Transportation Hub in Navan to accommodate national, commuter, regional and local bus services.

**MOV OBJ 15**

To work with the NTA and all transport operators to make all existing public transport services throughout the county accessible for people with disabilities, reduced mobility and older people and require that proposals for new transport infrastructure are subject to an Accessibility Audit.

**MOV OBJ 16**

To work with the NTA and relevant stakeholders to provide bus services in rural communities in the County.

## 5.7.5 Park and Ride Facilities

Park and Ride facilities integrate car use with public transport and assist those living in remote locations not well served by public transport to access public transport connections. It is important that park and ride facilities improve public transport accessibility without unduly intensifying road congestion, or increasing the total distance travelled by car. Park and ride sites should not be located where they might encourage transport users who would otherwise access public transport locally to drive further to access a site, thereby adding to congestion.

It is thus considered appropriate to include a policy in the Plan to provide Park and Ride schemes which improve public transport accessibility. These schemes shall be developed at appropriate locations which will not exacerbate road congestion or increase car travel distances. These locations shall be close to high quality road corridors leading from Core towns with good bus priority to commuter destinations in the metropolitan area.

It is the policy of the Council:

**MOV POL 13**

To promote and support the provision of Park-and-Ride facilities which improve public transport accessibility without exacerbating road congestion at appropriate locations within the County. NTA funded Park & Ride Schemes will be carried in accordance with the recommendations of the Park & Ride Development Office of the NTA.

**MOV POL 14**

To support the NTA to extend bus routes to the M3 Parkway Train Station in order to deliver a strategic multi modal park and ride facility at this location.

It is the objective of the Council:

**MOV OBJ 17**

To assess and determine the potential for bus-based Park and Ride facilities, in particular, close to high quality road corridors leading from settlements in the Core Area, with good bus priority to commuter destinations in the Dublin Metropolitan area.

**MOV OBJ 18**

To identify and develop suitable lands to provide for Park and Ride facilities at appropriate locations in the County.

**MOV OBJ 19**

To identify and develop suitable lands to provide for additional Park and Ride facilities at appropriate locations in Navan.

**MOV OBJ 20**

To support the delivery of a new car parking facility at Laytown Train Station in conjunction with the NTA and Irish Rail.

**MOV OBJ 21**

To facilitate the provision of a new car parking facility at Enfield Train Station in conjunction with the NTA and Irish Rail.

**MOV OBJ 22**

To implement suitable charging structures for Park and Ride facilities to make it more likely that those who need the service (i.e. those outside walking distance and where alternative public transport options are not available), will obtain parking. In addition, implement where appropriate, suitable measures on local roads adjacent to Park and Ride facilities to discourage commuters from parking on such roads.

## 5.7.6 Taxi

Accessible taxi and hackney services are a vital element in the public transport offering providing a demand-responsive 24 hour door-to-door service. Accessible taxis are often the only means of public transport available for those using wheelchairs or with mobility impairments. An accessible integrated public transport service is an essential prerequisite to enable people with disabilities to participate in the normal activities of daily living i.e. work, education, leisure and social activities. The NTA Strategy seeks to meet a target for wheelchair accessible taxis of 10% of the fleet by 2020, with the full fleet to be wheelchair accessible by 2035. It is desirable that taxis are modern and suitable for the needs of all users, and that they do not have an undue impact on local air quality or CO2 emissions.

The Council will continue to support improvements in taxi and hackney services in the County and will seek to ensure that all public transport services complement each other through the development of effective interchange opportunities throughout the County.

Please also refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives.

It is the policy of the Council:

**MOV POL 15**

To support and facilitate the provision of an accessible taxi and hackney service in the County particularly in the main urban centres.

It shall be an objective of the Council:

#### **MOV OBJ 23**

To provide public transport interchange facilities, including facilities for taxis, at appropriate points on the public transport network particularly in the main urban centres in cooperation with the NTA.

#### **MOV OBJ 24**

To facilitate the development of properly designated taxi ranks in order to improve public transport infrastructure and services at suitable locations such as retail development and leisure facilities in conjunction with the NTA.

### **5.7.7 Electric Vehicles (EV) and Alternative Fuel Vehicles**

Electric Vehicles (EV) refer to both Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV). In line with the Government target to electrify all new cars and vans by 2030, the NPF acknowledges the need to move away from ‘polluting and carbon intensive propulsion systems to new technologies such as electric vehicles and introduction of electric and hybrid traction systems for public transport fleets’. There are a number of charging points around the County and this Plan promotes the further installation and expansion of charging points for these vehicles in order to achieve the 2030 targets for full electrification.

The transport sector will undergo significant changes in the years ahead with technologies evolving to facilitate greater battery life and longer travel range as well as the development of alternative methods to fuel the transport sector. In this regard, the Council will also support non-EV alternative clean fuel sources as these technologies develop and subject to proper and sustainable planning considerations.

It is a policy of the Council:

#### **MOV POL 16**

To support the provision of infrastructure for electrical vehicles and alternative fuel vehicles both on street and in new developments as such technologies advance to become viable transport options.

It is an objective of the Council:

#### **MOV OBJ 25**

To facilitate the provision of electricity charging infrastructure for electric vehicles both on street and in new developments in accordance with car parking standards and best practice.

#### **MOV OBJ 26**

To liaise and collaborate with relevant agencies to support and encourage the growth of electric vehicles and E-Bikes with support facilities/infrastructure, through a roll-out of additional electric charging points in collaboration with relevant agencies at appropriate locations including retrofit of charging points in existing urban centres and park and ride facilities.



## 5.7.8 Green Schools

The Green-Schools programme is an environmental themed education programme, environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole school action for the environment. The aim of Green-Schools is to increase the students' and participants' awareness of environmental issues and transfer this knowledge into positive environmental action in the school and wider community. One of the themes of Green-Schools is focused on Travel. Walking School Buses consist of adults walking groups of pupils to and from school along set routes, with children joining the walking bus at various pick-up locations along the route. Many schools start the Walking School Bus on a one-day per week basis and increase its schedule over time. Initiatives such as Walk to School Week/Walk on Wednesdays can also be used to encourage children to become more active in their communities. These programmes facilitates children to walk safely to and from school, and to get used to this means of travel. The Council will continue to support An Taisce in the development of the Green Schools programme throughout the County.

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

### MOV POL 17

To identify and seek to implement a strategic, coherent and high quality cycle and walking network across the County that is integrated with public transport and interconnected with cultural, recreational, retail, educational and employment destinations and attractions.

### MOV POL 18

To support the provision of a long-distance inter-connecting walking/cycling route(s) between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland.

### MOV POL 19

To support the NTA in the development of a strategic pedestrian network plan for the main urban centres of the County<sup>15</sup>.

### MOV POL 20

To encourage, where appropriate, the incorporation of safe and efficient cycleways, accessible footpaths and pedestrian routes into the design schemes for town centres/neighbourhood centres, residential, educational, employment, recreational developments and other uses.

### MOV POL 21

To require that adequate facilities for the secure parking of bicycles be provided at convenient locations close to public transport nodes and public transport interchanges.

### MOV POL 22

To prioritise the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists in proximity to public transport nodes.

It is an objective of the Council:

### MOV OBJ 27

To implement, in conjunction with the NTA, the recommendations of the NTA strategy with regard to walking and cycling infrastructure.

**MOV OBJ 28**

To revise road junction layouts, where appropriate, to provide dedicated pedestrian and cycling crossings, reduce pedestrian crossing distances, provide more direct pedestrian routes, and reduce the speed of turning traffic.

**MOV OBJ 29**

To implement at appropriate locations pedestrian permeability schemes and enhancements.

**MOV OBJ 30**

To request the submission of a quality audit pedestrian and cycling permeability plans as part of new housing developments.

**MOV OBJ 31**

To implement at appropriate locations pedestrianisation schemes, particularly in central areas of high pedestrian footfall, such as core retail areas.

**MOV OBJ 32**

To continue the development of a network of Greenways in the County in accordance with the Department of Transport Strategy for Future Development of Greenways.

**MOV OBJ 33**

To engage in the Compulsory Purchase Order process when required in order to facilitate the timely delivery of the Greenway programme within the County.

**MOV OBJ 34**

To identify the provision of a trail head/public car park at the Hill of Down Rural Node proximate to the Greenway, to facilitate the re-opening of the rail station, subject to feasibility.

**MOV OBJ 35**

To support the installation of appropriate traffic management measures on a case by case basis on the approach roads to all schools throughout the county in the interest of road safety.

## 5.8 Developments of National and Regional Strategic Importance

### 5.8.1 Slane Bypass

A bypass for Slane has been a long-standing objective of the Council and has the support of the majority of the local residents, who have campaigned for its construction for many years. The bypass is noted within the National Development Plan 2018-2027 as key infrastructure ‘investment to support the ambition for development of the border region’ and is identified as a priority for delivery<sup>18</sup>. Further, the RSES (RPO 8.10 of the Strategy refers) supports the appraisal and delivery of the N2 Slane Bypass. It is an important infrastructural development that is required as a matter

of urgency. Since the refusal of the scheme by An Bord Pleanála in 2012, the Council and the TII have carried out a number of studies looking at traffic management alternatives through Slane and along the N2 aimed at reducing the number of HGVs travelling through the village and across Slane bridge. These studies examined the effects of various HGV bans, tolling measures, speed limits and other traffic management options on the road network.

Two public consultation meetings were held in relation to these studies in November 2012 and March 2015 and the findings were presented to the Council. The outcome of these studies concluded that traffic management options would not satisfactorily address the particular circumstances in Slane and were not shown as representing viable alternatives to a bypass.

An east-west bypass option in conjunction with the proposed north-south bypass has been considered however detailed studies indicate that there were insufficient benefits to warrant this additional bypass at this time. Work has now recommenced on the preparation of an application for consent to develop an N2 bypass for Slane village and funding and support is being provided by the TII to do so. The provision of a bypass in Slane has been prioritised in terms of funding and is identified as a priority project in Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021. Traffic management alternatives will continue to be examined as part of these studies.

There is agreement that the potential safety risks that affect the future well-being of all road users and communities, particularly the Slane community must be addressed. There are numerous road safety problems associated with the existing N2, particularly on the section which runs across the Slane Bridge and through Slane Village. These problems include substandard vertical and horizontal alignment, including steep gradients on the approaches to Slane Bridge and the N2/N51 crossroads junction, sharp bends, one-way shuttle traffic across Slane Bridge, tight turning radii at the N2/N5 junction, particularly for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's) and reduced forward visibility and junction visibility.

High volumes of HGV's have led to traffic congestion, delays and nuisance for residents and visitors to the village, posing significant ongoing road safety risks for all road users. Meath County Council and Transport Infrastructure Ireland have long recognised these significant road safety issues. The installation of interim road safety measures in 2002 improved some of the safety issues but the inherent safety problems continue to exist on the substandard N2 alignment and by effect, so too does the risk of serious collisions for both road users and residents.

In seeking a solution the Council recognises that a balance must be achieved between environmental, historical and archaeological considerations and the safety and other negative impacts caused by the current traffic situation in Slane village.

It is an objective of the Council:

#### **MOV OBJ 36**

To support and facilitate the delivery of an N2 Bypass to the east of Slane Village, which is considered to comprise essential infrastructural development and to construct same subject to obtaining the relevant development consents required and to reserve and protect route option

corridors from development which would interfere with the provision of the project. Development of the project will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.

## 5.8.2 Leinster Outer Orbital Route

The RSES indicates that long term protection shall remain for the outer orbital route (Leinster Outer Orbital Route) extending from Drogheda to the Naas/Newbridge area with intermediate links to Navan and other towns. The NTA Strategy for the GDA 2016 -2035 notes that while this project is not planned for implementation during the period of the Strategy, the finalisation of the route corridor and its protection from development intrusion is recommended.

It is the policy of the Council:

### MOV POL 23

To support the delivery of the Leinster Orbital Route, which is considered to comprise important infrastructural development, and when finalised, to protect the route corridor free of developments which could interfere with the provision of the project.

It is an objective of the Council:

### MOV OBJ 37

When finalised and agreed, to reserve the route corridor of the Leinster Orbital Route free of developments which could otherwise interfere with the provision of the project.

## 5.8.3 N2 Corridor

The N2 corridor functions as a vital cross border economic artery which is essential to facilitate strategic traffic movement and to maintain and improve accessibility to employment areas. The importance of this North-South route and its role in maintaining an “open all island” economy post Brexit is recognised within both the National Development Plan 2018-2027<sup>19</sup> and the NPF<sup>20</sup>. The NTA Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 includes an objective to provide ‘enhancements of the N2/M2 national route inclusive of a bypass of Slane, to provide for additional capacity on the non-motorway sections of this route, and to address safety issues in Slane village associated with, in particular, heavy goods vehicles.<sup>21</sup>’ The National Development Plan makes particular reference to and prioritises the upgrade of the N2 from Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross section of road which is already underway. The delivery of these works will continue to be supported and facilitated by the Council and the Council will seek the delivery of the Slane Bypass in the future in conjunction with TII and the Department of Transport.

It is an objective of the Council:

### MOV OBJ 38

To continue to support and facilitate TII, Fingal County Council, Louth County Council and Monaghan County Council in the planning and delivery of upgrades to the N2, as appropriate and

to reserve route corridor free from development which would interfere with the delivery of identified schemes, when finalised.

### 5.8.4 N3 Corridor

The N3 corridor is a critical cross border economic route which is essential to facilitate strategic traffic movement and to maintain and improve connectivity to the North-West and border region. The importance of this route is recognised in both the National Development Plan 2018-2027 and the NPF 2040.

The NPF identifies regional economic resilience and connectivity to the North- West as a strategic priority and the National Development Plan makes reference to the progression of the N3 Virginia Bypass which ties into the existing dual Carriageway in the jurisdiction of Meath County Council. The recently adopted Northern and Western RSES supports the TII and Cavan County Council in the planning and delivery of this strategically important Scheme. The delivery of these works will be supported and facilitated by the Council in conjunction with Cavan County Council, TII and the Department of Transport.

## 5.9 Roads Infrastructure

Whilst the Council is committed to the promotion of sustainable means of travel, and the encouragement of modal change from the private car, it is recognised that road infrastructure retains a central position in the overall transportation network, catering for the movement of buses, goods vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, as well as the private car. In undertaking transport policies, the Council will strive to provide, maintain and enhance road infrastructure to ensure the sustainable economic development of the County. Whilst traffic reduced noticeably during the recession, now, as the economic recovery takes hold, traffic numbers are growing steadily and particularly strongly in the south of the County. The Council is successfully implementing an ambitious Economic Development Strategy 2014-2022 and there is also further pent up demand for housing in the context of measures contained in Rebuilding Ireland.<sup>22</sup> Both of the foregoing will inevitably require additional roads to be built and existing roads to be modified and upgraded.

### 5.9.1 National Roads

The County is well serviced by the national road network with the M1 Dublin - Belfast (formerly N1, now R132), the N2 Dublin – Derry, M3 Cavan-Dublin (formerly N3, now R147), and M4 Dublin to Galway, Castlebar and Sligo (formerly N4, now R148), all traversing through the County linking the Dublin metropolitan area to the regions. The RSES recognises the importance of maintaining, improving and protecting the strategic function of the key transport corridors including the imperative to improve and protect the strategic function of the Dublin to Belfast International road

corridor, which forms part of the TEN-T core network. The national secondary roads, N51 and N52, are medium distance through-routes connecting important towns. The N52 is a particularly important infrastructural development and strategic route, linking Dundalk and Mullingar-Athlone-Tullamore. The County is very reliant on its road infrastructure for intra and inter county movement and access.

The development of the national road network is critically important for national inter-urban traffic in order to provide ready access to ports, airports and other strategic locations. The National Development Plan recognises the importance of achieving steady-state maintenance and safety of the National Roads network as a priority in order to ensure that the existing extensive transport networks, which have been greatly enhanced over the last two decades, are maintained to a high level to ensure high quality levels of service, accessibility and connectivity for transport users. Although responsibility for National Roads comes under the auspices of TII, the Council in conjunction with TII carries out major upgrading and improvements to National Roads in the county. These works include the provision of pavement overlays to existing roads, the provision of new sections of road and the provision of bypass roads or relief routes to towns on routes where their provision is necessary on planning, traffic, safety or environmental grounds.

Given that there are continuing restrictions on funding, the first priority for road investment is likely to be the expenditure required to maintain, renew, manage and operate the extensive existing network.

The NTA's Transport Strategy for the GDA 2016-2026 includes provision to further develop and enhance the national road network including the delivery of the following projects relevant to the County:

- Junction upgrades and other capacity improvements on the M1 motorway, including additional lanes south of Drogheda, where required;
- Enhancements of the N2/M2 national route inclusive of a bypass of Slane, to provide for additional capacity on the non-motorway sections of this route, and to address safety issues in Slane village associated with, in particular, heavy goods vehicles;
- Widening of the N3 between Junction 1 (M50) and Junction 4 (Clonee), plus related junction and necessary changes to the existing national road network<sup>23</sup>;
- Provision of additional service areas on the national road network in line with national policy;
- Provision of necessary upgrades to the national secondary road network, including bypasses, in line with the "Principles of Road Development" set out in Section 5.8.3; and
- Various signage, safety interventions, junction improvements and local reconfigurations on the national road network.

### **5.9.2 Regional and Local Roads**

Regional and local roads serve an important economic role and have a valuable social and community function. These roads account for 81% of the country's roads and are often the sole means of access for local economic activity, for example, designated towns such as Trim.

There are extensive lengths of road which the Council are required to maintain. This maintenance programme is financed from the Council's own resources and/or supplemented by State grants. As outlined in 'Investing in our Transport Future – A Strategic Investment Framework (DTTAS, 2015)', the level of funding required to maintain the existing road network will result in opportunities for new investment. Funding for maintenance will continue to be constrained which will have implications as to how such funding is targeted nationally. Local Authorities will be required to define a 'strategic road network of national, regional and strategically important local roads'<sup>24</sup> and identifying funding targeted in these areas. There is an increased emphasis nationally on project appraisal requirements which identify and prioritise upgrades that make the most appropriate use of available funding.

The Council will work in conjunction with Kildare County Council to deliver the section of the Maynooth Outer Orbital Relief Road within its administrative area. The RSES has a specific objective to support the continued development of Maynooth, co-ordinated with the delivery of strategic infrastructure including road linkages forming part of the Maynooth Outer Orbital Route in a manner which supports future development and population growth and builds on synergies with Maynooth University promoting a knowledge-based economy. Further, the RSES includes an objective to, 'Support the delivery of road infrastructure to release strategic residential and employment lands for sustainable development and to improve connectivity and the efficient movement of people and services in the town'.

It is the policy of the Council:

#### **MOV POL 24**

To safeguard the capacity and safety of the National road network by applying the provisions of the Department of Environment Community and Local Governments – 'Spatial Planning and National Roads-Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2012' to avoid the creation of any additional development access to national roads and intensification of existing access to national roads to which speed limits greater than 60kph apply, save in accordance with agreed 'exceptional circumstances' included in MOV POL 33.

#### **MOV POL 25**

To implement the actions of the Meath Road Safety Strategy and promote road and traffic safety measures in conjunction with Government Departments, the Road Safety Authority and other agencies.

#### **MOV POL 26**

To provide for and carry out improvements to sections of national, regional and county roads that are deficient in terms of alignment, structural condition or capacity, where resources permit, and to seek to maintain that standard thereafter. To ensure that, where possible, any maintenance and improvement strategies have regard to future climates.

#### **MOV POL 27**

To regulate, control and improve signage throughout the County and avoid proliferation of roadside signage, especially outside the 50-60kmh speed limit areas.

**MOV POL 28**

To promote the carrying out of Road Safety Audits and Road Safety Impact Assessments on new road schemes, road and junction improvements and traffic management schemes in accordance with the TII Publication TII-GE-STY-01024 and advice contained in the DTTAS (DTO) Traffic Management Guidelines 2012.

**MOV POL 29**

To liaise with TII and DTTAS regarding the revision of speed limits in the County.

**MOV POL 30**

To liaise with the NTA and TII (where appropriate) on appropriate control measures within its remit, designed to better manage the demand for road space to allow the efficient movement of essential traffic.

**MOV POL 31**

To have regard to the TII's Policy on Service Areas (August 2014) in the assessment of proposals for such developments.

It is an objective of the Council:

**MOV OBJ 39**

To facilitate the delivery of all of the roads projects outlined in the National Development Plan 2018-2027 and National Transport Authority's Transport Strategy for the GDA 2016-2035, in conjunction with the NTA, TII, Department of Transport and other stakeholders. Development of these road projects will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.

**MOV OBJ 40**

To develop an annual strategic road network plan for upgrading and required works for national, regional and strategically important local roads for the targeting of funding.

**MOV OBJ 41**

To develop in consultation with the TII, a programme for the upgrading, improvement and maintenance of the national road network within the County.

**MOV OBJ 42**

To develop and implement, in consultation with the Department of Transport a programme for the upgrading, improvement and maintenance of the non national road network in the County.

**MOV OBJ 43**

To implement a programme of traffic and parking management measures in towns and villages throughout the County, as resources permit.

**MOV OBJ 44**

To safeguard the capacity and efficiency of the national road network drainage systems in County Meath for road drainage purposes, save in exceptional circumstances.



**MOV OBJ 45**

To work in conjunction with Cavan County Council in the planning and delivery of the N3 Virginia Bypass Scheme located within the administrative area of Meath County Council. This project will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.

**MOV OBJ 46**

To require provision of parking standards in accordance with the standards set out in Chapter 11 Development Management for all developments.

**MOV OBJ 47**

To support and facilitate the delivery of the Ardee bypass and to prohibit development along any selected route that could prejudice its future delivery. This project will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.

**MOV OBJ 48**

To implement maintenance and improvement of roads in the County as set out in the Schedule of Municipal District Works and the Council's Annual Roadwork's Programme funded from the Council's own resources and State Agency grants.

**MOV OBJ 49**

To support essential public road infrastructure including, bypasses of local towns and villages and proposed national road schemes and where necessary reserve the corridors of any such proposed routes free of development, which would interfere with the provision of such proposals. Such road schemes include those specified in the non-exhaustive list in Table 5.1: Each of these projects will subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.

**Table 5.1**

<b>Scheme Name</b>	<b>Description of Works</b>
<b>Slane By-pass (N2)</b>	To deliver key strategic infrastructure including Slane Bypass incorporating new bridge over the River Boyne.
<b>N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross</b>	Improvements of road and junctions to address current capacity constraints.
<b>N3 Virginia Bypass</b>	Strategic radial corridor linking Dublin with Cavan and onward to Enniskillen
<b>M1 Junction 9 Drogheda (M1 South Junction)</b>	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.
<b>M1 Junction 8 Duleek</b>	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity

<b>M1 Junction 7 Julianstown/Stamullen</b>	Upgrading of this junction to improve capacity inclusive of the facilitation of vehicular access to / from Stamullen via the City North Business Campus to the M1 Interchange.
<b>N3 Clonee to M50</b>	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.
<b>M3 South of Junction 4</b>	Introduce an additional lane on both M3 carriageways in order to manage capacity on the network, in co-operation with planned M3 upgrades with Fingal County Council and TII.
<b>M3 Junction 5 Dunboyne</b>	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.
<b>M3 Junction 8 Navan South</b>	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.
<b>M3 Junction 9 Navan North</b>	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.
<b>N51 Tullaghstown</b>	Improvements of the National Secondary Route
<b>N52 Grange – Clontail (formally known as Fringestown Scheme)</b>	Re-alignment of the existing N52 and R162/N52 junction from a point west of the R162 junction eastwards to Clontail.
<b>N51 Dunmoe Phase II</b>	Realignment of N51 between Blackcastle Demense and Cruicetown. Final phase of N51 Navan – Slane.
<b>N51 Halltown</b>	Construction of junction improvement and re-alignment of minor roads.
<b>R132 Julianstown Bypass</b>	Examine feasibility and thereafter if appropriate progress the design and delivery of a preferred option.
<b>R147 Blackbull roundabout</b>	To replace the Blackbull roundabout with a signalised junction and the provision of a signalised controlled access on the R147.
<b>N51 Slane to Louth County boundary</b>	Re-alignment including widening of Mattock Bridge, and junction improvements.
<b>R150 Bettystown – Laytown Spine Road</b>	To continue to support the delivery of the North –South Spine Road linking Bettystown – Laytown.

<b>N52/R154 Junction</b>	Improve junction and re-align regional road to introduce a staggered arrangement.
<b>N52 Balrath Junction</b>	Re-align N52 and improve junction layout.
<b>N3-N4 Link road</b>	Provision of Ongar to Barnhill link road
<b>R162 Navan Kingscourt Road and R157 Dunboyne Maynooth Road</b>	Safety Upgrades
<b>Strategic Local Bypasses / Relief Roads (Map 5.2 refers)</b>	Examine feasibility and progress where appropriate local bypass and relief roads within the County.

**MOV OBJ 50**

To continue to deliver targeted capacity road upgrades within the County to eliminate congestion blackspots.

**MOV OBJ 51**

To support the delivery of two new signalised junctions to facilitate access to Dunboyne North for all modes of transport from a high quality regional road.

**MOV OBJ 52**

To continue to support the delivery of key strategic roads within Dunboyne to include an eastern distributor road to facilitate rail-focused development, new bus routes and reduce traffic levels in the town.

**MOV OBJ 53**

To promote the delivery of key strategic roads in the Key Town of Navan to include but not limited to: 1) link road from Dublin road to Trim road, 2) distributor road from R153 at Farganstown and future bridge across the River Boyne to N51 and North Navan 3) link road from Rathaldron road to R147 inclusive of bridge across the Blackwater 4) Trim Road to N3 Kilcarn Road, 5) Commons Road to N51 Athboy Road, (6) N51 Athboy Road to Rathaldron Road. Each of these projects will subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.

**MOV OBJ 54**

To work in conjunction with Kildare County Council to deliver the section of the Maynooth Outer Relief Road located within the administrative area of Meath County Council.

**MOV OBJ 55**

To promote the delivery of the following key strategic roads included but not limited to: Ratoath Outer Relief Road, Bryanstown Link Road (Drogheda), Navan Road – Dublin Road Link, Trim, M3 Junction 6/R125 to R147 distributor road. Each of these projects will subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.

**MOV OBJ 56**

To avoid locating residential development and other noise sensitive land uses in areas likely to be affected by inappropriate levels of noise.

**MOV OBJ 57**

To prepare updated Road Safety Plans in line with the National Road Safety Strategy and in consultation with the Road Safety Authority and relevant stakeholders.

**MOV OBJ 58**

To improve the visual quality of landscaping and naming of roundabouts in various locations throughout the County.

**MOV OBJ 59**

To carry out a transport study for Drogheda in conjunction with Louth County Council as part of the future Joint Urban Plan.

**MOV OBJ 60**

To carry out transport studies in the County and in conjunction with other Local Authorities as required.

**5.9.3 Section 48 and 49 Levies**

Financial contributions will be sought as part of the development management process for certain development under the provisions of Section 48 and Section 49 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Section 48 (general) schemes relate to proposed provision of public infrastructure and facilities which benefit development within the area of the Planning Authority, and are applied as a general levy on development.

A 'special' contribution under Section 48(2) (c) may be required where specific exceptional costs not covered by the general scheme are incurred by a Local Authority due to a specific development.

Section 49 (supplementary) schemes relate to the separately specified infrastructural service or projects – such as Dunboyne- Navan rail or roads infrastructure, which benefit a specific area (normally a corridor). Where schemes overlap with another Local Authority, the Section 49 Scheme will be developed in conjunction with that Local Authority.

It is the objective of the Council:

**MOV OBJ 61**

To utilise, where appropriate, the provisions of Section 48 and 49 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) to generate financial contributions towards the capital costs of providing local and strategic transport infrastructure, services or projects in the county. This will be done in conjunction with adjoining Local Authorities, where appropriate.

**MOV OBJ 62**

Where indicative road proposals are shown on the edge of a settlement boundary, they shall be considered to be included within the development boundary.

**5.9.4 Exceptional Circumstances**

Government policy regarding access onto national roads as provided for in the “Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines” seeks to avoid the creation of any additional access point from new development / intensification of traffic from existing entrances onto national roads outside the 60 kph speed limit. Section 2.6 of the Guidelines provides for exceptional circumstances to the above general policy provision. Planning Authorities may identify stretches of national roads where a less restrictive approach may be applied as part of the Development Plan process. Two scenarios arise, firstly in relation to developments of national and regional strategic importance and secondly, in relation to lightly trafficked sections of National Secondary Routes.

The Guidelines provide that a less restrictive approach may be adopted in the case of developments of national and regional strategic importance which by their nature are most appropriately located outside urban areas, and where the locations concerned have specific characteristics that make them particularly suitable for the developments proposed.

The Development Plan has identified a number of locations where exceptional circumstances to the general policy may be considered, as follows:

1. N52 south of Balrath Cross to facilitate bioenergy manufacturing plant and CHP plant
2. Navan North (Junction 9) to Mullaghboy Roundabout on N51 (New Junction Only);
3. Navan South (Junction 8) to Kilcarn Roundabout on R147 (New Junction Only);
4. N2 at Slane in the vicinity of the existing Grasslands Fertilizers facility (Seveso Site)
5. N51 at Slane Distillery and Castle;
6. N2 at Knockharley in the vicinity of existing regional landfill facility
7. N2 at Rath Roundabout to junction of Curragha Road
8. These are identified on Map 5.3.

It is the policy of the Council:

**MOV POL 32**

To ensure the protection of the existing roads infrastructure while improving the capacity and safety of the road network to meet future demands.

**MOV POL 33**

To avoid the creation of any additional access point from new development/intensification of traffic from existing entrance onto national roads outside the 60kph speed limit, except at the following locations:

1. N52 south of Balrath Cross to facilitate bioenergy manufacturing plant and CHP plant (Map 5.3.1);
2. Navan North (Junction 9) to Mullaghboy Roundabout on N51 (New Junction Only) (Map 5.3.2);
3. Navan South (Junction 8) to Kilcarn Roundabout on R147 (New Junction Only) (Map 5.3.3);
4. N2 at Slane in the vicinity of the existing Grasslands Fertilizers facility (Seveso Site) (Map 5.3.4);
5. N51 at Slane Distillery and Castle (Map 5.3.5);
6. N2 at Knockharley in the vicinity of existing regional landfill facility (Map 5.3.6);
7. N2 at Rath Roundabout to junction of Curragha Road (Map 5.3.7).
8. Each of these projects will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.

#### MOV POL 34

To review, as part of the Local Area Plan process, land at strategic locations adjoining urban-related motorway junctions which has previously been identified for employment generating uses, subject to compliance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities. In this regard, the following junctions will be examined:

- M1 Motorway Junction 7 (Julianstown)
- Junction 8 (Duleek)
- Junction 9 (Drogheda)
- M3 Motorway Junction 4 (Clonee)
- Junction 5 (Dunboyne)
- M3 Motorway Junction 6 (Dunshaughlin)
- Junction 8 Navan South
- Junction 9 Navan (North)
- N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon

The Planning Authority will continue to support development proposals in such circumstances where all of the criteria specified in Section 2.7 of the “Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines” are adhered to.

## 5.10 Climate Change

As set out in the Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, 43.4% of County Meath’s emissions coming from transport, it is a priority area of action as part of the strategy to address same. Providing more sustainable travel choices to our residents is a strategic priority that should reduce transport carbon emissions while delivering number of key economic, social and community benefits. A focus on residential development in sustainable locations, accessible to public transport infrastructure utilising brownfield lands in our existing settlements is essential to deliver a reduction in emissions.

It is an objective of the Council:

#### MOV OBJ 63

To undertake a risk assessment of County Meath transport infrastructure to identify areas at high risk of climate change impacts (e.g. flooding), over the life of the Development Plan.

#### MOV OBJ 64

To ensure that any transport maintenance and improvement strategies consider future climates by allowing appropriate selection of materials and prioritisation of road for repair subject to adherence to TII standards.

## 5.11 Freight

Efficient freight transport is essential to support economic activity. Given the geographic size of Ireland and the proximity of Dublin Port to the various centres in the GDA, movement by road is, and will continue to be, the dominant mode of freight transfer in the region, and throughout the wider State. The NTA Transport Strategy for the GDA, seeks to retain sufficient capacity within the road network to ensure that freight can be moved reliably and quickly to key destinations including ports and airports and has outlined a number of measures to achieve this within the Strategy. The Council will continue to support the NTA with the implementation of these measures in order to ensure the efficient movement of freight through the County. The potential impact of Brexit is a significant concern which must be factored into plans for the effective and efficient transport of freight.

Tara Mines has one of the few freight flows still operating on Irish railways today, for the transportation of zinc ore from Navan to Dublin (via Drogheda). Up to four trains a day are operated, and each of these is estimated to take the equivalent of forty lorries off the road. Irish Rail have been undertaking research into multimodal freight movement and have successfully completed three trials which increased load capacity up to 50%. Longer trains on the network will boost the competitiveness of rail freight to industry. The environmental benefits of rail freight would also be enhanced by operating higher capacity services – currently moving freight by rail instead of road reduces emissions by 75% per unit, longer trains could see emissions reduced to as little as one-tenth of the road equivalent. Irish Rail is continuously working with its customers as well as Freight Forwarders, Ports and the Irish Exporters Association to identify further opportunities and trends for rail freight development within the Irish and European market.

It is a policy of the Plan to facilitate and support the improvement of freight movements in the county via both road and rail. Facilities for truck parking are desirable to prevent nuisance and annoyance, and for safety reasons. It must be borne in mind that the road network represents the working environment for many people involved in the movement of goods and services. It is therefore important that service facilities and truck parking is provided, in appropriate areas, to

cater for their needs. It is also important to protect investment in the road network and protect key arteries, which are vital for movement of freight and are essential for commercial activity in the metropolitan area and hinterland areas from becoming overly congested.

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

#### **MOV POL 35**

To co-operate with and support the NTA and TII (where appropriate) on measures designed to improve freight transport in and throughout the County.

#### **MOV POL 36**

To support the preparation of a regional strategy for freight transport in collaboration with the relevant transport agencies and the other Regional Assemblies.

It is objective of the Council:

#### **MOV OBJ 65**

To identify appropriate locations for freight intensive developments, and require the preparation of Distribution and Servicing Plans<sup>25</sup> for such developments as part of the planning process.

#### **MOV OBJ 66**

To assess the potential for, and, if appropriate, introduce, HGV management measures in town centres.

#### **MOV OBJ 67**

Where appropriate, to require the provision of HGV parking facilities at on-line and off-line motorway service areas, petrol filling stations and other appropriate locations within the County in accordance with relevant planning guidelines and government policy.<sup>26</sup>

## **5.12 Aviation Sector**

The development and safeguarding of Dublin Airport is fundamental to the economic growth of the County given its proximity to Dublin Airport. The economic benefit to the region is outlined in the InterVISTAS report Dublin Airport Economic Study 2015. This study confirms Dublin Airport as an essential driver of the Irish Economy, as a primary gateway serving the country for air passengers and cargo. It is estimated that 97,400 jobs are supported by the airport and that €6.9bn is contributed to Irish GDP. In this context the Plan will seek to support and facilitate the development and expansion of Dublin Airport.

In 2019, a review of the effectiveness and appropriateness of the existing noise zones for Dublin Airport was undertaken. This review, completed by the Noise Regulator for Dublin Airport, concluded that noise zones should be updated to take into account increased annoyance to aircraft noise at lower noise exposure levels, and to account for night-time aircraft noise exposure which had not been previously considered. Based on the outcome of this review, the previous noise zones were replaced to set out revised noise zones.



No part of County Meath falls within Noise Zone A, which seeks to actively resist new provision for residential development and other noise sensitive uses. Instead, a portion of the County falls within Zone B and Zone C of the Noise Zones. Within these geographical areas, there is a need to minimise the adverse impact of noise without placing unreasonable restrictions on development.

Developments located with Noise zones B & C should therefore be controlled to require noise insulation where the predicted noise environment of the site is considered exceed levels appropriate for the development. In the case of residential development, this serves to protect the residential amenity of the proposed dwelling whilst safeguarding the future operations of Dublin Airport. The extents of the Noise Zones and Public Safety Zones for Dublin Airport are shown in the Plan maps nos. 5.4.1 & 5.4.2.

Guidance on Public Safety Zones and land use is provided in the document 'Public Safety Zones, 2005' by ERM Ltd. The Council will follow the advice of the Irish Aviation Authority and daa regarding the effects of proposed development on the safety of aircraft and the safe and efficient navigation thereof. Impacts of green energy infrastructure such as wind farms and photovoltaic's will be examined and considered under the Development Management Chapter of the Plan. The Irish Aviation Authority require that all planning applications for Solar PV arrays within a 15km radius of airports shall be accompanied with a Glint and Glare assessment which shall be referred to them for comment. These assessments should have regard to potential Glint and Glare towards existing and planned aviation receptors, in particular (i) Glare towards the 2 mile (3.2) km approach path for runways and (ii) Glare towards Air traffic control towers.

It is the policy of the Council:

#### **MOV POL 37**

To support aviation policy as set out in 'A National Aviation Policy for Ireland 2015'. In particular, through supporting the role of Dublin Airport as a key tourism and business gateway to the County and the wider Eastern and Midland Region.

#### **MOV POL 38**

To promote appropriate land use patterns in the vicinity of the flight paths serving Dublin Airport, having regard to the precautionary principle, based on existing and anticipated environmental and safety impacts of aircraft movements.

#### **MOV POL 39**

To implement the policies to be determined by the Government in relation to Public Safety Zones for Dublin Airport.

#### **MOV POL 40**

To take account of the advice of the IAA with regard to the effects of any development proposals on the safety of aircraft or the safe and efficient navigation thereof.

#### **MOV POL 41**

To refer all planning applications for Solar PV arrays located within a 15km radius of Dublin Airport to the IAA.

It is the objective of the Council:

#### MOV OBJ 68

To manage noise sensitive development in Noise Zone B and Noise Zone C, where aircraft may give rise to annoyance and sleep disturbance, and to ensure, where appropriate, noise insulation is incorporated within the development.

#### MOV OBJ 69

To ensure that development which would give rise to conflicts with aircraft movements on environmental or safety grounds on lands in the vicinity of Dublin Airport and on the main flight paths serving Dublin Airport is restricted.

#### MOV OBJ 70

To require noise sensitive development in Noise Zone B and Noise Zone C to undertake an internal noise assessment and where appropriate, demonstrate that relevant internal noise guidelines will be met.

#### MOV OBJ 71

1) To require that planning applications within a 15km radius of airports for Solar PV arrays shall be accompanied by a Glint and Glare Assessment.

2) These assessments shall consider potential Glint and Glare towards existing and planned aviation receptors, in particular (i) Glare towards the 2 mile (3.2) km approach path for runways and (ii) Glare towards Air traffic control towers.

**1-** The NTA is the transport authority for the Greater Dublin Area and the public licensing agency for Ireland. It was established under the provisions of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 and the Public Regulation Act (2009), on 1st December 2009.

**2-** The subject of a Draft Ministerial Direction, August 2019

**3-** [1] National Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 **4-** National Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035

**5-** See Chapter 11 Development Management

**6-** See Chapter 11 Development Management

**7-** [Page 144 Project Ireland 2040- National Planning Framework](#)

**8 -** [National Development Plan 2018-2027 page 58:](#)

**9-** [NTA Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area page 56](#)

**10-** This is subject to the Draft Ministerial Direction issued in relation to the RSES 2019-2031.

**11-** The National Roads Authority (NRA) was the state body responsible for the national road network. The NRA was established as part of the Roads Act 1993 and commenced operations on 23 December 1993 in accordance with S.I. 407 of 1993. The NRA merged with the [Railway Procurement Agency](#) and was effectively dissolved on 1 August 2015. The merger of the two agencies is called [Transport Infrastructure Ireland \(TII\)](#).

**12-** [National Development Plan page 52](#)

**13-** For further information on the development of greenway see Chapter 4 Economic Development

- 14** There is an approved Planning Scheme in place for this Greenway.
- 15-** [NTA Strategy for Greater Dublin Area p. 81](#)
- 18-** [National Development Plan 2018-2027 page 31](#)
- 19-** [Page 43 National Development Plan 2018-2027](#)
- 20-** [Page 142 Project Ireland 2040-National Planning Framework](#)
- 21-** [Page 82 National Transport Study for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035](#)
- 22-** Chapter 2 Core Strategy
- 23-** This project is identified as a priority for delivery under the National Development Plan 2018-2027, (page 431)
- 24-** Investing in our Transport Future – A Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport 2015