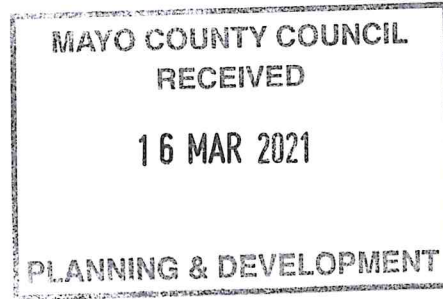


An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport



Mayo County Council,
Forward Planning Department
Castlebar
Co. Mayo
F23 WF90
14th March 2021

Re: Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027 – Draft Plan

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Sustainable Mobility Policy

The Department of Transport is currently developing a new Sustainable Mobility Policy framework. The phrase ‘sustainable mobility’ includes both active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport. It is the first sustainable mobility policy review in 10 years and the aim is to now put in place a new policy that supports -

- a shift away from the private car to greater use of active travel and public transport;
- travel by cleaner and greener transport; and
- comfortable and affordable journeys to and from work, home, school, college, shops and leisure.

The new policy will deliver on the ambitions of the new *Programme for Government* in the area of active travel and public transport. It will replace the existing sectoral policy documents which were published in 2009 - *Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020* and the *National Cycle Policy Framework*. A lot has changed in the 10 years since these policies were published and further changes are forecast over the next 20 years. Ireland has a growing population and an expanding workforce and this growth needs to be catered for in a sustainable manner.

The Department held a public consultation on the policy review between November 2019 and end-February 2020. The call for views was supported by the publication of a wide range of information, analysis and discussion papers across different areas of sustainable mobility¹.

¹www.gov.ie/en/consultation/f1b503-public-consultation-on-a-review-of-sustainable-mobility-policy/



The submissions received through the public consultation process will feed into the development of a Sustainable Mobility Policy over the coming months.

The new sustainable mobility policy will be closely aligned with the national strategic outcomes of the *National Planning Framework (NPF)* particularly in relation to compact growth; enhanced regional accessibility; strengthened rural economies and communities; sustainable mobility; and transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society. The *NPF* recognises that planning and transport policies are highly interdependent and a number of its key objectives support better integration of land use planning and transport planning.

The new policy will also support the actions in the *Climate Action Plan* to reduce emissions in the transport sector.

The aim is to develop a new policy framework that better supports sustainable mobility – linking more people, to more places, for more of their journeys and promoting increased use of active travel and public transport. The new policy will also need to consider the impacts of COVID-19 and if we need to do anything differently around the provision of sustainable mobility infrastructure and services.

Investment Framework

In 2015 the Department published its *Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport* which established priorities for Departmental investment strategy. Alongside the new sustainable mobility policy, the Department is developing a new land transport investment framework. This framework will prioritise future investment in the land transport network to support delivery of the *NPF's* national strategic outcomes.

Comments on Issues Paper

The Department welcomes the comprehensive Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027. Many of the themes in the Draft Plan are also key themes which emerged during the Department's public consultation and are included in its published discussion papers such as integrating land use and transport planning; promoting use of active travel; and addressing climate change issues.

Integrating land use and transport planning

The Department supports the recognition in the Draft Plan of the importance of aligning land use and transport policies. It is vital that both land use and transport are planned in ways that are mutually supportive to bring better cohesion in the planning between where people live, and their places of work, of education, where they can shop, location of public services, entertainment and social interaction. This can influence the type of transport needs that will



arise, and shape the way that those needs can be effectively addressed. As outlined above, the links between land use and transport are recognised in the *NPF* and the Department is working with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to strengthen the policy links between these areas.

Climate change mitigation

The Department's policy approach to achieving a greener transport sector is aligned with the Avoid-Shift-Improve principle, which is recognised internationally as a best practice approach in this area. One of the Department's published discussion papers outlined the current climate change challenges facing Ireland and the steps that are being taken in the transport sector to reduce emissions in line with climate action policies. The paper examined the suite of mitigation measures already in place and the potential role of new measures to avoid, shift or improve emissions through -

- reducing the frequency and distance of trips;
- shifting towards more environmentally friendly modes of transport, such as walking, cycling or using public transport; and
- promoting efficient fuel and vehicle technologies.

Western Rail Corridor

Goals MTP 9, MTP 10, MTO 18, CSP 3, CNP 3, KTP 1, SDP 2, EDO 34 all refer to the re-opening of the Western Rail Corridor. It should be noted that the reviews carried out into the feasibility of re-opening phases 2 and 3 of the Western Rail Corridor i.e. both the IÉ-commissioned EY Financial & Economic Appraisal and the independent review conducted by JASPERS (a consultancy agency of the European Investment Bank (EIB)), have been published. The findings of both reports can be viewed on the Department's website. (Link - <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1174d-review-of-western-rail-corridor-phases-2-and-3-athenry-to-claremorris/>.) The reviews of the WRC Phases 2 and 3 highlighted the need for a strategic overview of how our rail network should develop in the future to serve the National Strategic Outcomes in the National Planning Framework and a Strategic Rail Review to provide the backdrop for rail investment for the next 20 years is to now be undertaken. This proposed Review will be a hugely significant study which will provide a strategic perspective on the network – to look at its potential and how it can help realise the ambition of the National Planning Framework. The Review will take cognisance of the need for balanced regional development and will consider inter-urban, inter-regional and international connectivity with the latter considering the role of freight.



Greenways

The Department welcomes the commitment to Greenways in the draft Plan. However, we do note that all the planned Greenways are in the west of the County. The aim of the [Strategy for the future development of National and Regional Greenways](#) is to increase the number and regional spread of Greenways around the country. We would welcome future examination of Greenway options in the East of the County. To that end we would welcome protection of the Western Rail Corridor as a “Transport Corridor” rather than solely as a Railway line in the Goals laid out in the previous paragraph. This minor change would not prohibit the re-instatement of the Railway line but it would also ensure that consideration could be given at a future time for the construction of a Greenway on or beside the alignment of the railway line. This would be particularly welcomed for Phase IV of the Western Rail Corridor from Claremorris to Charlestown.

Since the previous development plan was published there have been important policy developments which are relevant to accessible and integrated public transport which the Department of Transport (DoT) considers should be reflected in the 2021-2027 Plan. These include:

- (i) the publication of the “whole of Government” National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2021 and the ratification by Ireland in 2018 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). 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.
- (ii) To make public transport fully accessible to people with disabilities requires a ‘whole journey approach’ which refers to all elements that constitute a journey from the starting point to destination. Local Authorities are a key stakeholder in this regard in the context of ensuring a universal design approach to the built environment, including footpaths, roads, pedestrian crossing points and bus stops/shelters.

The DoT welcomes the specific references, particularly in the context of transport and mobility, to people with disabilities, and older people, as well as the importance of Universal design principles in the draft Plan, including in SCP 6 (page 154), Sustainable Communities sections 8.4.4.2 and 8.4.4.4 (page 155) and Section 9.4.2 BEO 24 (page 173)

- (iii) the publication by the National Transport Authority (NTA) of its ‘Local Link Rural Transport Programme Strategic Plan 2018 to 2022’. Its mission statement is “to provide a quality nationwide community based public transport system in rural Ireland which responds to local needs.” Its key priorities include the reduction of



social exclusion and the integration of rural transport services with other public transport services. In addition, one of its key objectives is greater interaction/co-ordination with Local Authorities regarding the assessment of strategic transport needs and in the development of proposed transport plans for local areas.

The DoT welcomes the references to the Rural Transport Programme/Local Link and rural transport, including in Sections 6.4.1.3 MPT8 and MPT 14, “Public Transport 12.7” and “Rural Transport 7.9”.

The Department of Transport requests that under section 6.4.1.3 the text “Rural Transport Initiative” be replaced with the text “Local Link Rural Transport Programme.”

Yours sincerely

Jacqui Traynor

Reform Communications Emergency Planning

An Roinn Iompair

Department of Transport

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