

Forward Planning Section,
Planning and Environment,
Wicklow County Council,
County Buildings,
Wicklow Town

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RE: County Development Plan Review

Dear Sir / Madam,

The National Transport Authority (the “NTA”) have reviewed the Issues Booklet published by Wicklow County Council in relation to the County Development Plan and make the following observations and recommendations, based on the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 (the “Transport Strategy”).

Legislative Context

Section 31B of the Planning and Development Act (2000, as amended) states that where a notice is received by the NTA of the intention of a planning authority to review its development plan and prepare a new development plan, it shall prepare and submit to the relevant planning authority a report on the issues which, in its opinion, should be considered by the planning authority. This report shall address, but shall not be limited to—

- a) the transport investment priorities for the period of the development plan;
- b) the scope, if any, to maximise the performance of the transport system by effective land use planning;
- c) recommendations regarding the optimal use, location, pattern and density of new development taking account of its transport strategy; and
- d) recommendations on the matters to be addressed in the development plan to ensure effective integration of transport and land use planning.

Transport Planning Context

The NTA, in cooperation with Wicklow County Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and Transport Infrastructure Ireland, published the Bray and Environs Transport Study in 2019. This study set out in detail a number of further measures at the local level, elaborating on those contained in the Transport Strategy for Bray and surrounding areas. It is recommended that the findings of this study are taken into consideration in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

(i) Transport Investment Priorities for County Wicklow

The transport investment priorities for County Wicklow are set out in the Transport Strategy which applies to the period 2016 to 2035, and further developed for Bray and surrounding areas in the 2019 Bray and Environs Transport Study. In order that the Draft Development Plan fulfils its

requirement for consistency with the Transport Strategy objectives, it is recommended that the following schemes are included. These schemes comprise the transport priorities for the period of the Development Plan up to 2026 and beyond to 2035:

1. Public Transport

- a. Facilitation of increased rail service frequency on the south east corridor as part of the DART Expansion Programme;
- b. Station upgrades and enhancements;
- c. Other works to maintain the operational efficiency and safety of the railway network and additional works to enhance service provision;
- d. Luas to Bray;
- e. Interchange at Bray Station;
- f. BusConnects Bray to UCD Core Bus Corridor;
- g. Priority for bus on Lower Dargle Road;
- h. Further priority measures for bus services from Fassaroe to Bray town centre and DART station;
- i. Busway from Fassaroe to Old Connaught over County Brook at Ballyman Glen;
- j. Public Transport, Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge and link from the Golf Club Lands to Bray DART Station;
- k. Upgrades to bus stops, shelters and interchange facilities at key bus and bus/rail hubs; and
- l. Enhancement of the Rural Transport service.

2. Cycling

- a. The implementation of the GDA Cycle Network Plan;
- b. Cycle and Pedestrian Bridge over the N11 from Fassaroe;
- c. Provision for sufficient on-street public cycle parking at key destinations such as bus and rail stations, schools, colleges, hospitals and large workplaces, particularly in urban areas;
- d. Implementation of a comprehensive cycle route signage programme in conjunction with the development of the cycle network; and
- e. Cooperation with other agencies in the enforcement of laws in relation to parking on cycle lanes and cycle tracks.

3. Walking

- a. Provision of a safer, more comfortable and more convenient walking environment for those with mobility, visual and hearing impairments, and for those using buggies and prams;
- b. Development, in collaboration with the NTA, of a strategic pedestrian network plan, encompassing the main urban centres of the county, which will identify the key pedestrian linkages in those areas;
- c. Enhancement of pedestrian movement along the strategic pedestrian routes by widening footpaths where appropriate, providing better surfacing and by removing unnecessary poles, signs, street cabinets, advertising and other street clutter;
- d. Identification and implementation of pedestrianisation schemes where appropriate, particularly in central areas of high pedestrian footfall, such as shopping streets;

- e. Revision of road junction layouts, where appropriate, to provide dedicated pedestrian crossings, reduce pedestrian crossing distances, provide more direct pedestrian routes, and reduce the speed of turning traffic;
- f. Reduce waiting time for pedestrians at crossings in urban centres;
- g. Delivery of pedestrian information and wayfinding signage in urban centres across the GDA;
- h. Evaluation, and where appropriate, introduction of lower speed limits on residential streets and in urban centres;
- i. Cooperation with other agencies in the enforcement of laws in relation to parking on footpaths;
- j. Pedestrian permeability provision in new developments, and the maintenance, plus enhancement where appropriate, of such arrangements in existing developments; and
- k. The maintenance of enhancement of permeability and accessibility of public transport stops and stations for local communities.

4. Roads

- a. Capacity enhancement and reconfiguration of the M11/N11 from Junction 4 (M50) to Junction 14 (Ashford);
- b. Delivery of Wicklow County Council Part 8 N11 capacity and safety upgrades, as approved;
- c. Interim Traffic Management Measures Framework to protect strategic function of the N/M11 arising from the initial phased development of Fassaroe;
- d. New Road Bridge from Herbert Road to Upper Dargle Road;
- e. The development of a Traffic Management Plan for Bray Town Centre;
- f. Provision of necessary upgrades to the national secondary road network line with the “Principles of Road Development” set out in section 5.8.3 of the Transport Strategy;
- g. Various signage, safety interventions, junction improvements and local reconfigurations on the national road network; and
- h. Enhancement of regional and local roads in line with sections 5.8.2 and 5.8.3 of the Transport Strategy;

5. Other

- a. Implementation of Demand Management measures in line with section 5.9 of the Transport Strategy; and
- b. Park and Ride facilities according to the emerging investment programme of the NTA’s Park and Ride Office.

While the manner in which these schemes are provided for in the County Development Plan is a matter for the local authority, the NTA recommends that the maximum level of clarity possible is provided by the use of and reference to the above wording, or to the texts of the Transport Strategy and/or the Bray and Environs Transport Study.

(ii) The Scope to Maximise the Performance of the Transport System by Effective Land Use Planning

The scope to maximise the performance of the transport system through land use planning will be determined by the extent to which the local authority directs development into those locations which facilitate the prioritisation of public transport, walking and cycling. The NTA recommends

therefore that the Draft County Development Plan Core Strategy allocates population and employment growth into settlements which can demonstrate capacity to absorb such growth in a sustainable manner, and will benefit from enhanced transport infrastructure and services as part of the Transport Strategy, in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

(iii) Recommendations Regarding the Optimal Use, Location, Pattern and Density of New Development

Chapter 7 of the Transport Strategy sets out the principles regarding the optimal use, location, pattern and density of new development. The NTA recommends that these principles, set out below, are fully taken into account in the draft County Development Plan:

Strategic Planning Principles

- Residential development located proximate to high capacity public transport should be prioritised over development in less accessible locations;
- To the extent practicable, residential development should be carried out sequentially, whereby lands which are, or will be, most accessible by walking, cycling and public transport – including infill and brownfield sites – are prioritised;
- High volume, trip intensive developments, such as offices and retail, should primarily be focused into Bray, Greystones, Wicklow and Arklow;
- Except in limited circumstances, trip intensive developments or significant levels of development should not occur in locations not well served by existing or committed high capacity public transport;
- The strategic transport function of national roads, including motorways, should be protected by the full implementation of the “Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities”;
- All non-residential development proposals should be subject to maximum parking standards and based on public transport accessibility;
- In locations where the highest intensity of development occurs, an approach that caps car parking on an area-wide basis should be applied; and
- For all major employment developments and all schools, travel plans should be conditioned as part of planning permissions and be carried out in a manner consistent with existing NTA guidance.

Application

These principles can most effectively be applied by focussing growth into medium to high density residential, commercial and mixed-use developments on high-capacity public transport corridors, with an emphasis on existing rail lines. The NTA recommends that these principles are applied to the development of the Core Strategy and to the review of any zonings which is undertaken as part of the County Development Plan process. In the case of zonings that are to be reviewed as part of future Local Area Plans, the NTA recommends that the County Draft Development includes policies and objectives which ensure that the above principles are applied as part of such exercises.

(iv) The Matters to be Addressed in the Development Plan to Ensure Effective Integration of Transport and Land Use Planning

It is recommended that the County Development Plan sets out clearly the manner in which land use plans will ensure that the transport matters above have been fully considered. There are a number of ways in which this will be achieved, as follows:

- Review of NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area – the Transport Strategy is required to be reviewed every 6 years. As such, a review will commence and be complete within the timeframe of this County Development Plan. The alignment and consistency of the County Development Plan and the Transport Strategy is of paramount importance to the effective integration of transport and land use planning, and it is recommended that this relationship is clearly set out in the plan. The NTA will work closely with Wicklow County Council and all other relevant agencies in defining the manner of this relationship given that the current Transport Strategy is the first to be prepared and approved under the Dublin Transport Authority Act, 2009 and that the next Transport Strategy and Wicklow Draft County Development Plan will be the first prepared under the provisions of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly.
- Local Transport Plans – the NTA is committed to the preparation of local transport plans for large settlements within Wicklow. These documents will set out the local application of the transport priorities and associated measures outlined above. Each plan will be based on a set of clear objectives; the most recent demographic and travel information; and take into account the policies and objectives of Wicklow County Council, insofar as they align with those of the NTA. By undertaking such plans, the effective integration of land use and transport provided for by the Transport Strategy at the regional level, will be provided for at the local level through close cooperation between the NTA and the Wicklow County Council. It is recommended that the Draft County Development Plan sets out an approach to this matter by reference to these plans.

The NTA will be available to assist and cooperate with Wicklow County Council throughout the making of the County Development Plan and I trust that the views set out above will be taken into account during that process.

Yours sincerely,


Michael MacAree
Head of Strategic Planning