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Re: Maynooth Local Area Plan Issues Paper

Dear Sir/ Madam

The National Transport Authority (“the Authority”) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Issues Paper for the Maynooth Local Area Plan (LAP).

The Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 provides that each planning authority within the GDA shall ensure that its local area plans are consistent with the transport strategy (the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2011-2030). The Authority has published a draft Transport Strategy and the consultation process for the draft Transport Strategy is complete. The final document has been submitted to the Minister for Transport for his consideration. An integrated implementation plan, which will guide investment decisions over a six year period, will follow the adoption of the Transport Strategy.

While the Transport Strategy is currently a draft document, the Authority requests that Kildare County Council reflect the policies, objectives and measures contained within the draft Transport Strategy in the preparation of the Maynooth LAP.

The Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 provides that the NTA’s report on the preparation of the LAP shall address, inter alia, the following issues:

- (a) the transport investment priorities for the period of the Local Area 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 local area plan to ensure the effective integration of transport and land use planning.*

The draft Transport Strategy outlines a number of specific infrastructural measures which will impact directly on the Maynooth area and environs, including:

- The removal of level crossings on the line between Maynooth and Connolly; and

- The electrification of the line between Maynooth and Connolly which, in conjunction with signal upgrades, will enable Dart services to run from Maynooth to Bray and Greystones.

The measures would facilitate higher service levels and greater network accessibility, including the improvement of accessibility from Maynooth to the commercial and employment core of Dublin City Centre. However it is recognised that, in the current economic climate, these enhancements may not be delivered in full during the period of the LAP.

The draft Transport Strategy also outlines a number of measures which seek to improve bus and rail services (Measure Bus 1/2/3/4/5, Measure Rail 6). The integrated implementation plan, which will follow the adoption of the Transport Strategy, will guide investment decisions over a six year period.

These measures are aimed at enhancing accessibility to the city centre and the Designated Town and District Centres for the maximum numbers of people. Maynooth Town has been designated a District Centre under the draft Transport Strategy and the Authority would therefore recommend that the LAP would take into account the impact of this enhanced public transport accessibility on the area by providing for a high quality environment of pedestrian movement at a local level, facilitating the use of interchange between public transport services and for local trip making.

Measures LU1, LU2, LU3 and LU4 of the draft Transport Strategy outline the land use measures that should be considered when preparing the Local Area Plan. In particular, the LAP would be strengthened by taking account of the following principles/measures:

- A sequential approach to development, whereby, lands which are most accessible by public transport are prioritised for growth taking into account existing and partially completed developments and extant ten year planning permissions. Furthermore, the Authority would recommend a phasing of development to ensure that cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and public transport infrastructure/ services are delivered simultaneously with the construction of new residential units, commercial development and community facilities;
- Rail stations in District Centres should be the focus of higher densities, with development around rail stations predominantly residential with local level commercial activities provided;
- A strong focus on pedestrian and cycling movements for local trips, with all developments providing internal permeability for walking and cycling;
- Local services to be located and provided in a manner which ensures that access for the local community by walking and cycling is direct, safe and convenient;
- Severance within local catchments to be avoided to the extent practicable;
- That appropriate provision for delivery of goods and services is taken into account;
- A mix of dwelling types is provided to facilitate and encourage mixed residential communities to establish;
- The redevelopment of brownfield (previously developed) sites close to existing or proposed public transport corridors;
- There is cooperation between Local Authorities along boundary areas including the preparation of joint plans where appropriate;
- All non-residential development proposals in the GDA should be subject to maximum parking standards.

The Maynooth LAP area should be viewed in the context of its function as a District Centre within its catchment and as part of the wider Kildare area, whose accessibility would be substantially altered by the implementation of the draft Transport Strategy. The overarching policy approach taken in the

draft Transport Strategy is set out in Measure OVR 1 – transport user hierarchy, and it considers transport user needs in the following order:

- Pedestrians (including those accessing public transport)
- Cyclists
- Public transport users
- Freight, delivery and waste vehicles
- Private vehicle users

This hierarchy would be most important in terms of improving the public realm for pedestrians and cyclists within the LAP lands and its wider catchment and subsequently achieving a modal shift towards the more sustainable modes of transport. It is, therefore, recommended that the Local Area Plan for Maynooth would reflect this as the guiding approach in its movement strategy and in the design of the public realm.

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 provides that each planning authority shall ensure that its local area plans shall be consistent with the objectives of the development plan, its core strategy and the regional planning guidelines that apply to the area of the plan. In this regard, the Authority would recommend that the scale of employment and service provision (in particular shopping, education and leisure) facilities are commensurate with the settlement strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines for Maynooth.

It is anticipated that the on-going North-East Area Strategic Study currently being undertaken by Kildare County Council will inform the Local Area Plan process.

I trust that the views of the Authority will be taken in to consideration. We look forward to working with Kildare Council in the preparation of the Maynooth LAP.

Yours sincerely,



Hugh Creegan

Director of Transport Planning and Investment