

**Planning Department,
Abbey Mall,
Abbey Road,
Navan,
County Meath**

19th July 2011

Re. Proposed Variation No.12 to the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 –Core Strategy

Dear Sir/Madam,

The National Transport Authority (NTA) (hereafter referred to as the “Authority”) submits the following report on the proposed Variation No. 12 to the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 –Core Strategy (hereafter referred to as the Core Strategy). The Dublin Transport Authority Act, 2008 (as amended) requires that the Authority consider whether proposed variations to draft Development Plans are consistent with the Authority’s Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area. The following comments are based on policies contained in the draft Transport Strategy, which has been sent to the Minister for Transport for his approval.

The Authority welcomes the publication of a core strategy for Meath County Council as it will provide a framework for the long term spatial development of the County. There are a number of issues of concern that the Authority raises in this submission in relation to the proposed Core Strategy:

1. Development at Pace

It is stated in the proposed Core Strategy that *“unparalleled economic development opportunities exist adjacent to M3 Parkway to develop a multimodal public transport interchange which would allow the development of a strategic employment cluster”*. While Dunboyne is identified as a growth centre (Large Growth Town II) in the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs), Pace is not identified in the RPG as a designated growth centre. Therefore the Authority considers that the proposals for Pace set out in the Core Strategy would appear to be inconsistent with the RPG settlement hierarchy upon which the Authority’s draft Transport Strategy is based. The Authority would envisage that any development would occur sequentially in this area, from Dunboyne Town Centre outwards.

2. Multimodal Growth Corridors

Measure LU3 of the Draft GDA Transport Strategy states that *“development plans and Local Area Plans should ensure that they coordinate with the DoECLG and DoT policies to ensure there is a homogeneity between the urban centres designated in future plans and strategies (covering population settlements, employment, retail, and other services), relating this directly to their local and strategic accessibility, and particularly in relation to the provision of public transport”*. The Authority considers it essential that the employment and retail hierarchy is consistent with the RPG settlement hierarchy. While recognising the importance of multimodal corridors in facilitating economic development, the Authority envisages that the bulk of economic development should be concentrated within and/or the environs of the RPG designated settlement centres.

3. Stamullen

The proposed Core Strategy discusses that idea that Stamullen could be *“viewed in conjunction and linked to the Secondary Growth Town of Balbriggan”*. Economic development in Stamullen/Gormanstown is dependent on the delivery of a deep-water port on the east coast. Until such time as this transport project is determined, it is premature to provide for development of these areas in the short term (2013). Furthermore, the Regional Planning Guidelines does not designate Stamullen in the settlement hierarchy. As it is identified as a small growth town in the current Meath Development Plan 2007-2013, the RPGs states that economic investment opportunities should be considered and supported where sustainable and in keeping with the size and services of the town. Any change to the designation of Stamullen should only be considered through any future review of the current RPG settlement strategy.


4. Rural Housing

24% of the household allocation for Meath in the period 2011-2013 is assigned to rural housing. The Authority has some concern with the scale of rural housing development as it applies to one off housing, given that the Council’s stated policy is to consolidate rural housing into existing settlements in rural areas.

The dispersed and largely rural nature of one-off house locations do not have the potential to be served by public transport, nor do they facilitate easy walking and cycling access to services, which residential units should ideally have at the local level. A continuation of this trend would serve to undermine the ability to consolidate development.

I trust the above recommendation of the Authority will be addressed and would welcome the opportunity to discuss, should you have any questions relating to them.

Yours sincerely,



Hugh Creegan

Director of Transport Planning and Investment