



Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2

Dún Scéine, Baile Átha Cliath 2

tel: 01 879 8300

fax: 01 879 8333

email: info@nationaltransport.ie

web: www.nationaltransport.ie

Fiona O'Neill
Senior Executive Officer,
Planning Officer,
Carlow County Council
Athy Road,
Carlow.

1st March 2016

Re: Issues Paper in relation to Tullow and Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plans

Dear Sir / Madam,

I refer to the above-referenced pre-draft issues papers for Tullow and Muine Bheag / Royal Oak.

In relation to transport and accessibility, the Authority would draw attention to the following issues, for your consideration.

One of the principal elements, informing the preparation of the plan, would be to gain a better understanding of Tullow, Muine Bheag and their environs in terms of:

- current trip patterns and journey purposes by mode, within, into and through the town;
- current road network characteristics, capacity constraints and traffic management measures;
- current development patterns and future development objectives;
- the operational requirements of public transport services and current issues relating to the operation of buses through the town;
- the walking and cycling environment, particularly in the vicinity of schools and the town centre;
- the operational requirements of a range of different commercial and non-commercial activities in the town, including town centre commercial uses, industrial/ distribution activities, primary / secondary schools and any hospital / medical centre facilities within the town; and related to this
- current on-street and off-street parking provision, parking demand patterns and requirements across a range of different locations and land use types;

taking into consideration,

- all modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport, private car and goods vehicles); and
- a range of accessibility requirements, including the needs of mobility impaired people.

Based on a better understanding of the above, the local area plans for both settlements should establish a range of policy and evidence-based objectives and measures, relating to the following:

- improving road safety and reducing the severance effect of local and through traffic;
- improving and facilitating the use of walking and cycling modes for local trips within the towns / their environs, in particular to destinations such as the town centres and schools
- increasing the use of public transport, through improved route legibility, accessibility to well-located bus stops and improved passenger waiting facilities;
- developing a parking management strategy for the towns' town centres and their environs, relating to both on-street and public off-street parking; and
- the management of goods delivery within the town centre areas.

From this, should come an integrated set of network objectives across all modes, with associated traffic management and sustainable transport objectives.

In regards public transport services, the local area plans for both towns should be informed by a clear vision of the towns' functions in the operation of bus-based public transport services.

The function of bus services in both towns should be recognised in the local area plans and facilitated with a view to exploiting the commercial and other opportunities presented by this function and optimising travel time reliability through the town.

The Authority would draw the Council's attention to recent changes to bus services, following the withdrawal of Bus Eireann Route 5, in the particular case of Tullow. Details of all current services pertaining to both towns can be found on the National Journey Planner.

Public Transport Service Planning - The Role of the National Transport Authority

The Authority has statutory responsibility under the Dublin Transport Authority Act of 2008 and the Public Transport Regulation Act of 2009 for securing the provision of public passenger land transport services throughout the State, by:

- contracting public service obligation (PSO)^[1] public transport services, by bus, rail, local link (rural) bus and rural taxi / hackney, and
- licencing public transport services provided on a commercial basis by bus, coach, taxi and hackney.

^[1] Section 47 of the DTA Act of 2008 defines public service obligation as 'a requirement specified by the Authority in order to ensure public passenger transport services in the general economic interest which a public transport operator, if it were considering its own commercial interests, would not assume or would not assume to the same extent or under the same conditions without reward'.

It is recommended that the local area plans include recognition of the role that the Authority fulfils in relation to transport services, as those services relate to travel patterns in Co. Carlow and the two subject towns.

The Authority determines in the case of each PSO contract, the level of service to be provided and the funding to the operator to provide that level of service. It is recommended that the Council contact the Authority in the first instance when seeking enhanced or new public transport services and the development of integrated transport services in any area, to discuss its needs.

Finally, it is recommended that the preparation of the local area plans for both towns is informed by a range of current guidelines, relating to the design of roads and streets, traffic management, cycle infrastructure provision and transport demand management.

I trust the Authority's comments will be taken into consideration in the preparation of the local area plans.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Mac Aree

Head of Planning and Data Analysis