

**Forward Planning Team,
Meath County Council,
Planning Department,
Abbey Mall,
Abbey Road,
Navan,
County Meath.**

16th January 2013

Re: Pre - Draft Trim Development Plan 2014 – 2020

Dear Madam/ Sir,

The National Transport Authority (“the Authority”) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Pre - Draft Trim Development Plan 2014 – 2020.

Section 31B(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000¹ assigns the Authority certain obligations in the preparation of a development plan. Where a notice is received by the Authority under section 11(2) it is required to prepare and submit to the relevant planning authority a report on the issues which, in its opinion, should be considered by the planning authority in the review of its existing development plan and the preparation of a new development plan.

Among other issues, such reports should address the following issues,

- (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 the effective integration of transport and land use planning.*

¹ As inserted by Section 95 of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008

General Comment

Infrastructure

Comment

The Authority has published a Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area and the consultation process for the Draft Transport Strategy is complete. The final document has been submitted to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport for approval. In relation to the transport investment priorities for Trim and environs for the period of the development plan, Measure ROAD 3 of the draft Strategy, provides that the Authority will seek:

(a) “the finalisation of the route corridor for an appropriately scaled Leinster Outer Orbital Route and its protection from development intrusion; and

(b) “an incremental approach to the delivery of the project, with partial development only during the Strategy period targeted at addressing deficiencies in the existing road network in terms of road safety or congestion”

The alignment of such a route may be proximate to Trim environs. While the specific alignment for this route has not been finalised, the Development Plan should not jeopardise the future delivery of this project.

The Authority will continue to invest in the upgrade of the pedestrian, cycle and bus infrastructure in Trim on a case by case basis.

Recommendation

To facilitate the implementation of projects, it is recommended that pedestrian, cycle, bus and road infrastructure is identified, prioritised and phased in the Trim Development Plan to ensure that future transport investment is directed to appropriate areas. The Authority is willing to assist Meath County Council/ Trim Town Council in this process.

While the specific alignment for this Leinster Outer Orbital Route has not been finalised, the Development Plan should not jeopardise the future delivery of this project.

Land Use Planning Issues

Comment

The Issues Paper states that an area of 14.8 ha of residentially zoned lands is required to accommodate the additional designated housing units assigned by the Draft Meath Development Plan 2013-2019. It further states that there is c.96.9ha of excess land zoned for residential uses.

Recommendation

To be consistent with the Draft Transport Strategy, it is recommended that a sequential approach to the development of residential zoned land is adopted in the Development Plan whereby residential zoned lands closest to the town centre/public transport is prioritised for development. This may

involve a significant reduction of zoned residential land and/or that existing residential zoned land is subjected to an order of priority for their release for development.

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

- Local services such as convenience stores, doctors' surgeries and schools should be located and provided in a manner which ensures that access for the local community by walking and cycling is direct, safe and convenient;
- All development areas should provide for internal permeability for walking and cycling;
- The design of new developments should incorporate new walking and cycling routes, or exploit existing direct routes, to social and commercial facilities in the central areas of Trim;
- Parking, where required, should be located and designed in such a manner that it does not dominate the streetscape and does not compromise walking, cycling and public transport;
- The provision for the delivery of goods and services should be considered in the design of new and existing development, to improve efficiency and minimise impact on the local community in Trim, and the built and natural environment;
- Severance within local catchments, particularly on key access routes, should be avoided as far as practicable; and
- A mix of dwelling types should be provided to facilitate and encourage mixed residential communities.

Transport planning for Trim town and environs is an integral part of the preparation of the Trim Development Plan. The Authority welcomes the commitment to prepare a transport plan for Trim and integrated into the new Trim Development Plan. As part of this process, it is requested that the transport plan is prepared in consultation with the Authority and addresses, inter alia, the implementation of the following relevant measures contained in the Draft Transport Strategy.

1. Traffic Management Measures/ Roads Issues

Comment

It is considered that the existing road network in Trim may facilitate the implementation of traffic management measures which could address safety issues and facilitate more sustainable transport provision within Trim and in its environs. It may also facilitate, in line with measure FRT2 of the draft Transport Strategy, the potential of introducing a heavy goods vehicle (HGV) management system for the town of Trim.

It is stated in the Issues Paper that the objective for the development of a distributor road (inner relief) road to relieve the town of traffic congestion and serve new residential areas remains outstanding. The proposed transport plan should address the need for this road, consistent with Measure ROAD 1 of the Draft Transport Strategy.

Recommendations

The Authority recommends the Trim Development Plan should have a significant focus on managing traffic, addressing safety issues and facilitating more sustainable transport provision within Trim and in its environs.

The Authority recommends that consideration be given to the potential for the introduction of a system of HGV controls/ restrictions for Trim town centre.

It is recommended that all new road proposals should be assessed against Measure ROAD 1 of the Draft Transport Strategy.

2. Walking Measures

Comment

Increasing the share of people travelling on foot and by bicycle supports the objectives of the Draft Transport Strategy and the success of the Draft Transport Strategy is fundamentally dependent on achieving an increase in such movement. There is significant potential to increase the mode share for walking and cycling in Trim, given the provision of the road network and the potential to introduce cycle/ pedestrian friendly traffic management measures within Trim.

Recommendation

In relation to walking measures, the Authority recommends the following measures from the Draft Transport Strategy to be considered for inclusion in the Trim Development Plan:

- the inclusion of policies and specific measures to support walking and improvements to walking facilities (WCY8);
- restrictions on general motorised traffic travelling through the heart of Trim, by diverting, where practicable, through traffic onto suitable alternative routes, whilst permitting through movement for public service vehicles (WCY1);
- the retention of access for town centre deliveries and visitor car parking in appropriate locations and at appropriate times (WCY1);
- potential for reductions in traffic speeds in the town centre (WCY2);
- reconfigurations to street space including widening of footpaths and rationalisation of street furniture, poles and signs, and removal of redundant poles, signs or other clutter in Trim and its approaches (WCY3);
- the design of new residential areas to provide a safe and pleasant movement environment for pedestrians and cyclists, including suitable lighting, with residential frontages overlooking routes, and provision of appropriate landscaping and streetscaping features along routes (WCY4);
- the provision of adequately lit footpaths on both sides of roads and streets in built up areas, except in exceptional circumstances (WCY5);
- the widening of existing footpaths, where these are too narrow to comfortably and safely cater for users (WCY5);
- the maintenance of footpaths to a good standard, and where appropriate the upgrade of footpath surfaces with higher quality materials (WCY5);

- audits of existing footpaths, identifying existing constraints and barriers to pedestrian movement such as redundant poles, signage, guardrails or telephone kiosks followed by removal or relocation of barriers or clutter where appropriate, whilst taking account of signage requirements (WCY5);
- the provision of tactile paving and the raising of carriageways or lowering of kerbs at pedestrian crossing points and the provision of audible signals at controlled crossing points, where appropriate (WCY6);
- revisions in junction layouts where appropriate, to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, provide more direct pedestrian routes and reduce the speed of turning traffic;
- the provision of zebra crossing points or pedestrian signals on all junction arms, at junctions where it is likely to be beneficial to pedestrian safety or convenience, starting with junctions on major roads and with higher pedestrian numbers;
- the adjusting of traffic signal controls where appropriate to reduce the wait time for pedestrians in Trim town centre and environs;
- additional pedestrian crossing points away from junctions, with greater use of zebra crossing facilities or rapid response pedestrian signal facilities; and
- provision of wheelchair and buggy friendly pedestrian islands where islands are provided at crossing points.

In relation to cycling measures, the Authority recommends the following measures from the Draft Transport Plan to be considered for inclusion in the Trim Development Plan:

- measures to improve the cycling environment in Trim and its inner approaches before other areas of the network (WCY11);
- improving cyclist priority and safety at junctions (WCY12);
- providing high quality segregated cycle lanes, or off road cycle tracks, where speeds or volumes of traffic remain high (WCY12);
- providing more direct routes for cyclists, including the introduction of cycle contraflow lanes on one-way streets, and the creation of new pedestrian and cycle only links where appropriate (WCY12);
- providing secure on-street cycle parking (WCY15) and secure, sheltered on-site cycle parking and supporting facilities for cycle commuters at:
 - Schools and other education facilities;
 - Workplaces; and
 - Other destinations likely to attract cyclists (WCY16);

3. Bus Infrastructure Measures

Comment

Currently, bus is the primary mode of public transport in Trim and environs and provides an essential link the Dublin Metropolitan Area and surrounding urban centres. Given this role, it is critical that appropriate infrastructure is provided in Trim to make this mode more attractive to users and improve the overall public transport travel experience.

Recommendation

In relation to the bus infrastructure in Trim, the Authority recommends that consideration is given to the incorporation in the Trim Development Plan of the type of measures set out in Section 10.2 of the Authority's Draft Transport Strategy, to the extent relevant.

4. Car Parking

Comment

The supply and management of parking at a destination is central to the management of transport demand.

Recommendation

In relation to car parking in Trim, the Authority recommends that all non-residential development proposals in the GDA should be subject to maximum parking standards (see Table 8.1 of the Draft Transport Strategy, which shows a number of these land uses and sets out regional maximum standards which should apply to them).

The National Transport Authority requests your consideration of the above comments and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the delivery of some of the transport objectives in this plan.

Yours sincerely,



Hugh Creegan

Director of Transport Investment and Taxi Regulation