

Forward Planning Section,
Kildare County Council,
Áras Chill Dara,
Devoy Park,
Naas,
Co. Kildare

10th July 2013

Re: Newbridge Draft Local Area Plan 2013-2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

The National Transport Authority (“the Authority”) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Local Area Plan for Newbridge.

Newbridge is defined in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (2010-2022) as a Large Growth Town II – which are important self-sustaining regional economic drivers, accommodating significant investment in transport, housing, economic and commercial activity with high-quality transport links to Dublin and other large towns. For towns such as Newbridge, the Authority seeks to ensure that investment in transport is maximised in value through complementary land-use planning.

Population and housing

The Authority acknowledges the requirement for consistency between the draft LAP and the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and the Kildare County Settlement Strategy that is contained in the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017.

In terms of residential development, the draft LAP identifies that existing planning permissions, along with future proposals on existing zoned residential land, will account for the entirety of the Kildare County Settlement Strategy requirement for new residential units in the town up to 2017, as

well as any further requirement up to 2019. The Authority endorses the approach to residential zoning in the draft LAP, as it aligns with the County Development Plan's Settlement Strategy, in terms of providing for the overall number of new housing units required. It also represents an orderly form of development of Newbridge due to the location of residential zoned lands in close proximity to the train station and to the town centre.

Economic Development

Provision for new employment lands in Newbridge will be largely fulfilled by the draft LAP zoning 'H1' for an industrial and employment campus on a 94.5ha site to the east of the town. In the draft LAP, Objective EDO-1 (p35-36) states, *inter alia*, that development of the location will be subject to a detailed masterplan, which shall include proposals for links to public transport infrastructure, and also include a Mobility Management Plan. The Authority supports this objective as set out.

Movement and Transport

The Authority has recently collaborated with Kildare County Council (KCC) to create a 5-year transport investment framework programme for the county. This investment programme (as part of the Sustainable Transport Measures Grants – STMG - funding programme) prioritises key transport investment proposals, including schemes for Newbridge.

It is important to establish a policy basis in the LAP for this investment in sustainable transport measures in Newbridge during the plan period. It is recommended that the Public Transport Policies listed PT1 – PT6 (pages 82 & 83) be re-titled as 'Movement & Transport' policies, as this would reflect the references to pedestrian and cycle measures, as well as bus and rail, that feature in the subsequent list of policies.

It is recommended also that the list of policies incorporate the following changes:

- The first policy on the list should reference the Authority's funding of STMG projects, with a suggested wording as follows:

To ensure that the delivery of movement and transport schemes in Newbridge during the plan period is consistent with the 5-year Transport Investment Framework Programme prepared jointly by Kildare County Council and the National Transport Authority.

- The second policy should reference the Authority's draft Transport Strategy, which was referenced in PT4 in the draft LAP. It could be worded as follows:

That all development proposals would promote walking and cycling modes in Newbridge by ensuring consistency with the relevant measures contained in Chapter 9 of the Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2011-2030 (or as amended) during the period of this plan.

- The draft LAP's policies PT1, PT2, PT3, PT5 and PT6 should be included as the remainder of the list of Movement and Transport policies.

The Authority and Kildare County Council have, in 2013, jointly carried out a review of the Main Street and local streets in Newbridge town centre, funded by the Authority's STMG programme. Among the objectives that have emerged from the review are to reduce through traffic along Main Street and Eyre Street, improve pedestrian and cycling facilities in the town centre, and to facilitate the future bus priority schemes into and out of Main Street. The list of Street and Road Infrastructure Objectives, SRO 1 to SRO 12 in the draft LAP, are in compliance with those objectives, and therefore the Authority supports those Infrastructure Objectives.

The Objective SRO 7 seeks that improvements are carried out on the roads and streets identified for upgrade in Map 2 of the draft LAP. Although it is identified on the map, the Authority seeks that particular priority would be given to upgrading Station Road and Charlotte Street, to provide high-quality links to the rail station. It is acknowledged that other draft LAP objectives seek to deliver upgrades to parts of the route between the town centre and the station (e.g. SRO 1 (c), SRO 11 (b)), but is recommended that an additional Street and Road Infrastructure objective is included which identifies the requirement to upgrade Charlotte Street and Station Road, between Main Street and the LAP boundary, in order to facilitate pedestrian, cycle and bus movement between the town centre, rail station and developing residential areas.

Additionally, as regards the Street and Road Infrastructure Objectives, and the accompanying Map 2 'Movement Objectives', it is noted that there is no objective within the list that relates to the roads objectives at points F, G and H on the map. This may be an omission from the list of proposed transport links listed under objective SRO 6.

At the localised level, the draft LAP seeks to promote the development of the town centre by providing Design Briefs for four key areas which will guide the content of future development applications in those areas. The Authority supports that approach in general, and welcomes in particular:

- The inclusion of aims for connectivity and movement, based on increasing permeability by introducing shared surfaces to existing carriageways to cater for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The addition of the proposed new streets in the town centre, as they will further benefit permeability.
- The inclusion, under Design Briefs 2 and 3, of the prioritisation of multi-modal use of Military Road for pedestrians, cyclists and future public transport services.

The Authority notes the inclusion of the Town Centre Objective RO 5 which seeks to implement a Town Centre Improvement Scheme, and it would be strengthened by referencing the Authority's draft Transport Strategy for the GDA 2011-2030, rather than the *Statement of Strategy* that is referenced in the text of the objective as presented in the draft LAP. The remainder of the objective is satisfactory and the Authority supports the objective.

I trust that the views of the Authority will be taken into consideration in the finalisation of the Newbridge LAP.

Yours Sincerely,



Hugh Creagan

Director of Transport Investment and Taxi Regulation