

# **Introductory Statement from Gerry Murphy, Chief Executive, National Transport Authority**

June 25, 2014

Thank you for the invitation to attend. I understand that there are two particular areas of our activity upon which the Committee wishes to focus. These are:

- **construction of Luas Cross City and**
- **plans for transport infrastructure**

I will deal very briefly with each in turn. To assist me in dealing with your questions I am joined by Hugh Creegan who manages transport investment within our organisation.

## **Firstly, Luas Cross City...**

In summary, it is a 6km-long light-rail project that extends an existing Luas line right across the city to the new Dublin Institute of Technology campus at Grangegorman, and onwards to the large residential area of Cabra. It will have 13 stops with 8 in the core city centre area. The route passes along some key streets in the city including Dawson Street, College Green, O'Connell Street and Parnell Street.

The optimum way to build such a line through a city centre with least effect on businesses and residents is through a series of enabling contracts that prepare the way for a main infrastructure contract which then can be carried out as expeditiously as possible.

The principal enabling contracts are:

- cellar investigation and infilling works, which have been successfully completed;
- the removal, repair and storage of items of heritage value that are impacted by the scheme, and
- the diversion of the many underground utilities from the path of the Luas tracks.

The Utilities contract is underway at the moment having commenced on site in January. Work sites are currently in operation from St. Stephen's Green northwards and are due for completion in Quarter 3 of 2015.

Maintaining pedestrian and traffic movements, and the frequency and reliability of public bus services have been central principles in planning the works. A traffic forum involving our Authority, Dublin City Council, the Railway Procurement Agency, An Garda Síochána and Dublin Bus and meets regularly to plan and review progress. The Utilities contract is a Target Cost contract which is a contractual structure that incentivises the contractor to complete the works as expeditiously as possible and to work collaboratively with the client.

We have put in place a comprehensive communications structure for the whole project. In 2013 we appointed a specialist Communications Director to develop and lead the engagement with the public and all the relevant interests in the city. Multiple communication channels are now in play including:

- A dedicated website [www.luascrosscity.ie](http://www.luascrosscity.ie), supported by a Freephone service (1800 303 653), information email, Twitter and Facebook
- Luas liaison officers are on the ground in daily engagement with contractors and retailers/businesses to address local issues
- Traditional and new media communication channels – flyers, email, database, letters, social media, advertisements, etc. used on a daily and weekly basis.
- A Public Information Office was opened in a unit off Dawson Street in 2013 where the liaison officers are based with the communications team
- There are monthly and quarterly meetings with business representative and all key stakeholders.

The Main Infrastructure contract was issued for tender in April and it is anticipated that this contract will be awarded in December 2014. This is a design-build contract and therefore the initial phase of this contract will involve the contractor's finalising of detailed designs for the works before the main works commence on street in 2015. The project will be completed in 2017 and it is planned that the new Luas services will commence in October 2017 following a period of testing and commissioning.

The Railway Order of An Bord Pleanála approving Luas Cross City omitted a northbound stop on Dawson Street. In 2013, the Authority engaged engineering consultants to consult with the businesses and their representative groups and to review again the options for a stop. I am pleased to say that a Railway Order application for a northbound stop on Dawson Street will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála at the end of this month.

Finally, the European Investment Bank has provided significant financial backing for Luas Cross City via a €150m loan.

### **The second topic is our plans for transport infrastructure.....**

The Authority manages three programmes for investment in public transport infrastructure:

1. Greater Dublin Area: This area spans the four Dublin local authorities and counties Meath, Kildare and Wicklow. The programme is of the order of €150m per annum and covers rail, bus, light rail, traffic management, cycling and walking investment.
2. The cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford: This programme is of the order of €14m per annum and covers bus, rail, traffic management, cycling and walking investment.
3. Transport accessibility measures across the State for those who are mobility impaired. This programme is of the order of €1.5m per annum.

Approximately 40% of the State's population and economic activity is in the Greater Dublin Area and public transport is critically important for the efficient movement of people. Consequently the Authority is required to prepare long and short term statutory plans for the region.

Our *Implementation Plan 2013 to 2018* was statutorily approved by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport in January of this year and it identifies the key objectives and outputs to be pursued by the Authority for the region over the period of the Plan.

The table below sets out the planned distribution of investment across the various modes of travel.

**Table: Investment Plan (€ millions)**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Totals
<b>Bus</b>	33.9	41.0	35.0	35.8	35.0	35.0	<b>215.7</b>
<b>Light Rail</b>	25.5	29.5	36.0	64.5	65.0	65.0	<b>285.5</b>
<b>Heavy Rail</b>	33.4	30.4	32.5	10.5	15.0	15.0	<b>136.8</b>
<b>Traffic &amp; Sustainable Transport</b>	47.8	48.3	41.5	39.2	35.0	35.0	<b>246.8</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>140.6</b>	<b>149.2</b>	<b>145.0</b>	<b>150.0</b>	<b>150.0</b>	<b>150.0</b>	<b>884.8</b>

Each year we fund over 200 projects as the programme ranges from small cycling schemes up to big schemes such as Luas Cross City. Therefore I will just give a broad outline of the projects to be developed out to 2018.

**On the bus side we will:**

- continue to invest in the bus fleet that is providing subsidised services to achieve an average age of the bus fleet on publicly subsidised routes at less than 7 years. This investment envelope also covers Bus Éireann coach fleet and its regional cities' fleet
- further develop the Quality Bus Corridor network and increase prioritisation for buses at traffic signals
- develop a coach parking facility close to Dublin City Centre for commuter and tour buses / coaches to park when not in use
- improve bus stops, with new style bus poles and enhanced information panels
- progress the design and planning of three Bus Rapid Transit projects:
  - Swords/Airport to City Centre
  - Blanchardstown to N11 (UCD) and
  - Clongriffin to Tallaght

and commence priority improvement works on the Swords BRT route.

**Regarding light Rail,** we will complete the construction of Luas Cross City.

**The key new project for Heavy Rail** will be the opening up of the Phoenix Park Tunnel to commuter train services from the Kildare rail line (currently terminating at Heuston Station). These services will

run through to Drumcondra, Connolly, Tara, Pearse and Grand Canal stations. Investment in city centre re-signalling will create the extra train paths needed through Connolly station to facilitate the tunnel services.

**Traffic and sustainable transport projects** will be many and varied but the biggest single element will be the gradual delivery of a safer and better cycle network across the region.

All the above are the immediate plans that can be progressed within the constraints of the current national capital investment plan. We are of course planning for a longer term programme. To underpin our analytical work for a new 20 year plan we are carrying out two major studies this year. Firstly we are studying all the options for serving the fast growing Fingal local authority area and its main town of Swords. Fingal had a population growth of 14% between the census of 2006 and 2011 compared to the figure of 8% for the State. Without appropriate public transport capacity it will be severely constrained in terms of both residential and economic expansion. We have just commissioned a major engineering review of bus, light rail and heavy rail options for serving that area.

Separately we are carrying out a detailed business case for the DART Underground project, a high capacity tunnel link that would inter-connect the coastal rail line with the Kildare rail line, facilitating a DART network from Balbriggan to Hazelhatch and from Maynooth to Greystones, with interchange and new stops in the city centre.

The most important factor in the long-term planning of transport infrastructure for the Dublin region will be the availability of State funds in the period beyond 2020 and also the feasibility of the Public Private Partnership model to draw in debt and equity funding from private parties. These matters will become clearer in the coming years. We know from demographic and economic projections that additional rail capacity will be needed in the future; finding the solutions that are fundable will be the focus of our work in the coming year.

Regarding the investment plans for the cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford, the next five years will see a continuation of current patterns. In 2013, approximately €14.5 million was distributed across 59 different projects. The split of funding in 2013 is shown below:

Total	Bus	Walking / Cycling	Traffic Management	Other
€14.46m	€5.09m	€4.18m	€3.61m	€1.58m
100%	25%	29%	35%	11%

Each city will continue with improvements to bus priority while the Authority will invest further in real time information and will commence a programme of bus stop improvements, all in order to grow bus modal share. In this regard I would point out that bus passenger numbers increased in 2013 in Galway city by 9.3% and in Cork city by 8.2%, following on from rises of 7.2% and 1.9% respectively in 2012. Also Cork, Galway and Limerick will have public bike schemes operational later this year.

In **Cork** city, investment over the coming years will focus on the City Centre area and a limited number of key bus and cycling corridors linking the City Centre with the County Metropolitan Area.

In relation to the section of Cork County within the Metropolitan Area, it is intended, given the limited available funding, to concentrate that investment in Douglas, one of the strategic areas identified by the County Council, rather than dilute the potential benefits by investing on a widely dispersed basis

In **Galway**, a large number of walking and cycling improvements are planned along with further developing the bus prioritisation enhancements that have been implemented in the city.

**Limerick** City has been designated as a Smarter Travel Demonstration Area by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and is receiving substantial funding for sustainable travel projects. The general regional cities fund will be used for complementary bus priority and for cycling and pedestrian safety schemes in areas not already included under the Department's separate programme.

In **Waterford**, bus-related investment will be on improvements to the key corridors to the city centre, to Waterford Institute of Technology and its surrounding employment area, and Waterford General Hospital. Cycling routes will also be developed.

Finally the Accessibility Grant funds will be used in the main across the country to improve access to bus and rail stations and to grant-aid additional wheelchair accessible taxis.