

Statement of Strategy

2023 > 2025



December 2022

Statement of Strategy



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Introduction



NTA Board's introduction

The Board is very satisfied with the significant progress that the National Transport Authority (the “Authority” or the “NTA”) was able to achieve in the implementation of the ambitious work programme set out in the last Statement of Strategy covering the years from 2018 to 2022.

Notwithstanding the impact which the Covid-19 pandemic has had, the Authority has continued its important work to improve and expand the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure and services throughout the State. This includes the delivery of key transport infrastructure projects and also ongoing projects which are aimed at

improving public transport provision such as Next Generation Ticketing, the TFI 90 minute fare and Connecting Ireland which is the programme to improve connectivity in rural Ireland.

The Authority is leading the transport planning in our cities, on a statutory basis in Dublin and in partnership with the local authorities in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. A key delivery in the last strategy was the review of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (“GDA”) which has been approved by the Minister.

Encouraging active travel is a key focus for the Authority, with investment of almost €1m per day in projects supporting strategic pedestrian and cyclist routes, including access to schools, permeability links and urban greenways. The provision of high quality walking and cycling facilities will encourage more people to switch to active travel and help to tackle climate change.

BusConnects (Dublin) continues to progress with the launch now complete for 4 phases of an 11-phase programme of bus network changes across the Dublin region. Other major public transport infrastructure projects have also progressed with the Railway Orders for MetroLink and the DART+ West now lodged with An Bord Pleanála, as well as planning applications for 6 Core Bus Corridor projects.

In line with current Government policy and strong ambitions to transition Ireland to a sustainable economy and society, climate action initiatives are now at the very forefront of the Authority's goals and strategic objectives. Delivering on the Government's Climate Action Plan is dependent on the successful shift to sustainable mobility and high levels of cross-collaboration including between Departments and State Agencies.



This is the National Transport Authority's fifth Statement of Strategy and sets out our objectives for the period from 2023 to 2025.



NTA Board's introduction

The Board supports the many ongoing initiatives in the area of climate action which includes the ongoing transition of the public transport fleet to zero emission which is progressing well and other measures to reduce carbon emissions, including the promotion of active travel and public transport use. Looking forward, this strategy sets out the ambition for the Authority to deliver much improved sustainable transport infrastructure to meet the country's carbon emission reduction targets.



The Board supports the many ongoing initiatives in the area of climate action.



In meeting its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty outlined within Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2015, the Authority proactively works to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of its employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by the policies and plans of the Authority.

For the duration of this Statement of Strategy, the Authority will utilise its Exchequer funding allocations to deploy the necessary resources to achieve its strategic objectives and target outcomes.

On behalf of the Authority, we would like to acknowledge the work of our many partners including Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), transport operators, Local Link delivery offices and local authorities, particularly the invaluable contribution of frontline workers during Covid-19.

The Board also recognises the important role played by the Authority's management team and employees in delivering on these and numerous other projects. They have maintained their professionalism and dedication during what has been an extremely challenging time for all the public service and maintained the resilience of the public transport system.

NTA Board

CEO's statement



Anne Graham
Chief Executive Officer



I am delighted to introduce the Authority's Statement of Strategy for the next three years, which has been developed with the participation of staff and our Board and following consultation with key stakeholders.



As we approach the second quarter of the twenty-first century, it is apparent that public transport and mobility are now more important than ever. Following what has been a very challenging period for the provision of public services in general, we have observed just how essential a functioning public transport system is to going about our daily lives, assisting in building a more equitable society, and in terms of taking action to address climate change.

At a time when a virus threatened our very way of living, we are also faced with a number of significant challenges including climate change, a housing crisis, an energy crisis, worsening traffic congestion and air pollution. The work of the Authority in delivering, operating and regulating public transport services and overseeing the roll-out of active travel and public transport infrastructure as well as a greener fleet has therefore never been more relevant or more necessary.

Government's Climate Action Plan 2021 calls for decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030. It also provides the roadmap for reaching the ultimate target of net-zero by 2050. The implementation of this plan will help to build a cleaner, greener economy and society in Ireland. The plan targets a 50% reduction in emissions from the transport sector by 2030 - this will be achieved through increased active travel and public transport use, electric car adoption and fleet transition. The public transport sector will play a major role in Ireland's transition to climate neutrality. However, if Ireland is to achieve its climate action targets, society will also need to play its part by accelerating the shift to the use of more sustainable transport modes including active travel and public transport.

CEO's statement

In order to fully enable society to play its part, the Authority and the public transport / mobility eco-system will need to provide a viable alternative to the private vehicle. Ultimately, this is what will be required if we are to be successful.

The National Development Plan 2021-30 ("NDP") sets out the Government's overarching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-30, including transport related projects, with investment required of approximately €35bn. Much of the investment in transport is allocated to active travel and public transport. The unprecedented

investment in sustainable mobility evidences the intent of Government to tackle climate change and the strong desire to encourage a shift to more sustainable transport modes.

The NTA will play a central role in delivering the Department of Transport's National Sustainable Mobility Policy, which sets out a framework for walking, cycling and public transport to support Ireland's climate ambitions. This policy calls for high levels of collaboration across Government Departments, Agencies and the private sector and is one which NTA looks forward to delivering on.

I would like to thank all of our stakeholders and staff who have continued to deliver sustainable transport infrastructure and services even in challenging times and whose contribution to the development of this strategy document has also been greatly appreciated. The Authority has grown very significantly over the last few years and it's important that we retain our values and culture of inclusivity and diversity, as we develop the organisation further to meet our growing mandate.

I look forward to working with the Board and my colleagues on implementing the objectives set out in this Statement of Strategy.

Anne Graham

Chief Executive officer



The unprecedented investment in sustainable mobility evidences the intent of Government in terms of tackling climate change



Who is the NTA



The National Transport Authority is a statutory non-commercial body, which operates under the aegis of the Department of Transport (“DoT”). The NTA was established in 2009, obtaining its legislative remit from the Dublin Transport Authority Act (2008) and the Public Transport Regulation Act (2009).

The NTA is primarily responsible for developing and implementing strategies to provide high quality, accessible, sustainable transport across Ireland and the regulation of public transport provided on a commercial basis.

One of the primary statutory functions of the NTA is to develop and implement a transport strategy for the GDA. The Authority has also led the development of transport strategies in Galway, Cork, Limerick and Waterford in partnership with the local authorities.

The NTA funds public transport infrastructure, acting as the Approving Authority under the Public Spending Code for major sustainable transport investment.

The NTA contracts, funds and oversees Public Service Obligation (“PSO”) public transport services, ensuring that vital bus, rail and light rail services are available to communities in all parts of the country under the Transport for Ireland (“TFI”) brand.

The NTA is also the licensing authority for the commercial bus sector and Small Public Service Vehicles (“SPSVs”) in accordance with the Taxi Regulation Act (2013), as well as enforcing clamping regulations.

The full range of roles which the NTA is responsible for are outlined in the following two pages.

295 million

Passenger journeys in 2019 (pre Covid-19 disruption)

€1.564 billion

Total NTA funding allocation for 2022

2,080

Total number of bus fleet operating PSO Services at end 2022

€660 million

PSO fare revenue in 2019 (pre Covid-19 disruption)

Over 6 million

Number of Leap cards sold to date

14%

Proportion of PSO bus fleet that is low emission or zero emission at end 2022

Who is the NTA - responsibilities

At a national level, the role of the Authority is to:



Procure public transport services by means of public transport service contracts



Provide integrated ticketing, fares, and public transport information



Develop an integrated, accessible public transport network



Promote the use of sustainable transport through developing and implementing multi-channel marketing and promotional activities



Regulate public bus passenger services that are not subject to a public transport services contract



Provide bus infrastructure and fleet



Provide cycling facilities and schemes to promote cycling



Develop and implement a single public transport brand



Develop and maintain a regulatory framework for the control and operation of Small Public Service Vehicles (taxis, hackneys and limousines), their drivers and associated services (including dispatch operators)



Regulate vehicle clamping in the State



Prepare statutory submissions in relation to Regional Planning Guidelines



Collect statistical data and information on transport



Enforce EU passenger rights in rail, maritime and bus and coach transport



Validate EU authorisations and journey forms in relation to bus and coach travel in accordance with EU Regulation No. 1073/2009



Operate as the national conciliation body for electronic toll service providers

Who is the NTA - responsibilities

Within the Greater Dublin Area the Authority has the following additional roles:



Undertake strategic planning of transport



Invest in all public transport infrastructure



Secure the effective management of traffic and of transport demand

Other functions:

Non-statutory functions undertaken on behalf of Department of Transport:



Strategic transport planning for the regional cities (Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford)



Planning and funding of sustainable transport projects in the regional cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford



Administration of the Smarter Travel Workplaces and Smarter Travel Campus Programmes



Manage the funding of the Rural Transport Programme



Provision of accessibility funding to transport operators and other relevant bodies



Management of the Green-Schools Travel Programme

Much has changed and much has been achieved



Since the formulation of our last Statement of Strategy (NTA Statement of Strategy 2018-2022), much has been achieved in a very challenging environment. Whilst the latter half of the previous strategy's lifetime coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic, the Authority has continued to drive forward with implementing its mission and vision for the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure and services in Ireland. That's not to say that the pandemic hasn't impacted on the Authority's activities and the provision of and use of public transport services.

Like many countries the world over, Ireland's transport system was severely disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic and associated national lockdowns and work-from-home guidelines. During the pandemic, public transport demand was severely reduced as only essential travel was permitted for long periods of time while capacity was also restricted in accordance with public health guidelines. Given the prevailing Government guidance and the needs of essential workers during the pandemic, the Authority's priority during this period was to maintain services to as great an extent as possible, some of which were contracted to the Authority, others being operated under a licence issued by the Authority. Supplementary Government funding was also critical in maintaining the public transport services, including to support the SPSV sector.

Passenger numbers are now at or in excess of pre-pandemic levels in many areas, but are spread more evenly than in the past, with reduced usage in the traditional morning and evening peaks, offset by increased demand during the daytime, late evening and weekends. Recent growth has been driven by additional services in Dublin as part of the BusConnects programme, as well as fare reductions and simplifications, including the TFI 90 fare in Dublin and the government's decision to reduce fares nationally by 20% in 2022.

The Covid-19 pandemic followed a period of growth in public transport. In 2018 and 2019, the Authority achieved record increases in public transport passenger journeys and associated fare revenue (up 7.9% in 2018 and a further 6.8% in 2019), brought about by strong economic activity as well as increased capacity on the public transport system, to the extent that capacity constraints were being felt at peak times.

Much has changed and much has been achieved

Notwithstanding the major challenges the pandemic threw up, the Authority, the transport operators and their personnel continued to provide public transport services including SPSV services, throughout the country during the entire pandemic, highlighting the resilience of the network.

Progress on the various programmes and projects which the Authority is delivering with its various partners in Government also continued, despite the pandemic. This included the planning and implementation for key public transport infrastructure projects including BusConnects, DART+, MetroLink,

LUAS Finglas and Connecting Ireland.

The importance of active travel was underlined during the pandemic. The National Development Plan 2021-2030, the Climate Action Plan 2021 and the National Sustainable Mobility Policy all published during the last strategy, reaffirm the importance the Government places on sustainable transport and in particular active travel infrastructure. To this end, the Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (“TII”), the transport operators and the various local authorities around the country have been working closely to accelerate the delivery of this vital infrastructure.



On the next page, we provide a snapshot of just some of the programmes and projects delivered by the Authority during the life of the previous Statement of Strategy. It is clear - much has been achieved.

Much has changed and much has been achieved

Transport strategies



Transport strategies have been developed and are in place for the Greater Dublin Area, Cork, Galway, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford. The review and update of the Galway Transport Strategy will commence in 2023.

Compact development



Since 2018, the Strategic Planning Team has promoted compact development by engaging with local authorities and developers in over 700 large-scale planning applications and land use plans. The core objective has been to ensure that development is located in the right place; is at the appropriate density to be supported by sustainable transport; and designed and planned in a manner which integrates effectively with our major projects such as BusConnects and MetroLink.

Accessibility



Measures included:

- PSO bus and coach fleet has now transitioned to be fully wheelchair accessible;
- Progressing to 97% of the Local Link vehicle fleet that provides regular services being low floor vehicles and 89% for the demand responsive services (an improvement from 85% and 71% respectively in 2021);
- In 2022, 29 wheelchair accessible bus bays installed;
- In 2022, 10 railway station lifts and 2 escalators were renovated/renewed plus 13 lifts had video call installed;
- Upgrade of 2 railway stations including new footbridges and lifts, combined with other accessibility measures;
- Funding of expanded community car scheme; and
- Adoption of the Just A Minute (JAM) and Please Offer Me A Seat card across public transport.

MetroLink and Luas



The light rail projects of MetroLink and Luas Finglas were progressed. Government have approved the preliminary business case and the railway order application for MetroLink has been submitted to An Bord Pleanála. Following two rounds of public consultation, the proposed route for Luas Finglas is in the process of being finalised.

Sustainable transport infrastructure



There was investment of €655m in walking and cycling facilities throughout the country during 2018-2022, increasing from €35m in 2018 to €289m in 2022. This included delivery of approximately 250km of new and upgraded cycle lanes.

Connecting Ireland



The NTA developed Connecting Ireland, a rural mobility plan which sets out a programme of enhancements to public transport services across Ireland. Implementation of the first phase commenced in 2022. Over 25 new and enhanced services have already been introduced during the year with a full programme planned for the next 4 years.

Much has changed and much has been achieved

BusConnects

Dublin

Government authorisation under the Public Spending Code was issued in March 2022 in respect of the overall BusConnects Dublin Preliminary Business Case. Since then, planning consent applications for six of the twelve corridor projects, delivering bus and cycle infrastructure, were submitted to An Bord Pleanála prior to the end of 2022. Separately, construction of a major bus interchange at Liffey Valley Shopping Centre was substantially completed at the end of 2022 and will become operational in early 2023.

A key part of BusConnects Dublin is the replacement of the ticketing system. Requests for tenders for the “Next Generation Ticketing” system,

allowing simpler payments by debit/credit cards and mobile phones, were issued in May 2022.

2021 saw the launch of the first two phases of the BusConnects Dublin new bus network - the H-spine (Howth Road corridor) and the C-spine (Lucan/Celbridge/Maynooth corridor) inclusive of four additional 24 hour bus services on Routes C1, C2, C5 and C6. Phase 3 was launched in May 2022, which saw the introduction of the N4 and N6 orbital services on the north side of the city, with Route N4 also operating on a 24 hour basis. In October 2022, Phase 4 – the G Spine (Ballyfermot corridor) – was implemented incorporating two additional 24 hour routes – G1 and G2.



Cork

Following two rounds of public consultation the new network of bus services planned under BusConnects Cork was finalised and published in June 2022. Planning for its implementation has now commenced.

Also in June 2022, the first round of public consultation was commenced in relation to the Emerging Preferred Routes for twelve Sustainable Transport Corridors forming a key element of BusConnects Cork.

Limerick

In 2022 work commenced on redesigning the bus network in Limerick with a public consultation on the draft new network expected to take place in early 2023.

Galway

During 2022 work commenced on redesigning the bus network in Galway as part of the BusConnects Galway programme, with a public consultation on the draft new network expected to take place in early 2023. A planning consent application was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in September 2022 for the Cross City Link, a core part of BusConnects Galway, which proposes enhancements to bus, cycle and pedestrian movement in the core city centre.

Electric Bus Fleet

In March 2022 a major framework contract for the provision of up to 800 double deck electric buses was signed, supplementing a similar framework agreement for up to 200 single deck electric buses signed in 2021. First deliveries of new electric buses are due to be received at the end of 2022, with those buses due to go into service in 2023 following testing and commissioning.

Much has changed and much has been achieved

Development of PSO services



Annual vehicle kilometres operated on the PSO public transport network increased by over 13% between 2018 and 2021, primarily on the bus network.

New and improved services have been rolled out across the bus network during this period. Following a series of tender competitions, Go-Ahead Ireland commenced operations on Outer Dublin Metropolitan Area routes in 2018, and in the Kildare to Dublin commuter corridor in 2019. Bus Éireann successfully tendered for the operation of bus services in Waterford City and commenced operating improved services in 2019. 24 hour bus services have been introduced on a number of bus routes in Cork and Dublin. As part of the Bus Connects Network Redesign project, increases in service levels, particularly outside peak periods and at weekends, have been introduced in Dublin during 2021 and 2022.

There have been substantial improvements in bus punctuality from 2018 to 2022, with increased contractual Minimum Performance Standards and regular constructive engagement with operators helping to deliver a structural shift in on-time performance. For example, comparing the first two quarters of 2022 and 2018, 66% of services in the Bus Éireann direct award contract operated on-time in 2022 vs. 48% in 2018. In the case of services in the Dublin Bus contract, 68% of services operated on time in 2022, vs. 58% in 2018.

Smarter travel programme



The programme helps workplaces and campuses to develop and implement sustainable and active travel plans for staff and students. There are over 200 partners in the programme across the public and private sectors, with 42 organisations joining the programme in the 2018-2022 period.

Rural Transport



Over the last 5 years, the NTA has overseen a continual development and expansion of both regular rural bus services and door to door services in rural Ireland. This has led to more modern and accessible buses on the road, running both commuter services and new evening and weekend services, as well as further integration with regional bus and rail services. There has been significant growth in the rural regular services through 2022 and these services now carry over 40,000 passengers per week, which is almost double that in 2019.

Organisational expansion



Since 2018 the NTA has almost tripled its employee headcount from 83 to 237, this large employee increase continuing throughout the Covid-19 pandemic despite the many challenges to recruitment. These additional 154 roles have built upon existing capabilities and skills in the areas of engineering, transport planning, technology, regulation, project management, finance, procurement, and support services to allow the Authority to meet its growing mandate.

Much has changed and much has been achieved

Commercial bus services



Between 2017 and 2019, the commercial licensed bus sector saw 10% growth in scheduled vehicle kilometers, 18% growth in passenger journeys, and 23% growth in fare revenue. After the Covid-19 outbreak, the NTA provided financial support to allow commercial bus operators to continue providing licensed commercial services that enabled delivery of essential services.

Low / zero emission bus fleet transition commenced



280 hybrid diesel electric double-deck buses have been delivered in Dublin and the regional cities. A further 45 single deck battery-electric buses and 62 double deck battery-electric buses were delivered in 2022. In 2021, 3 new hydrogen fuel-cell electric double-deck buses entered service as part of an alternative fuels technology pilot scheme.

Public awareness programmes



Many customer communication campaigns were delivered across public transport operators, including anti-racism, ticketing, Covid-19 customer behaviour and a range of campaigns to encourage customers to use existing and new services. This contributed to the orderly operation of public transport, timely promotion of services and increased awareness of the TFI brand to 63% among adults. NTA also delivered several awareness campaigns to encourage people to get involved in our public consultation initiatives, in particular BusConnects which has benefited from significant public engagement.

Support for upgrading SPSVs



The NTA awarded grants of up to €20,000 per vehicle to SPSV drivers to support the purchase of electric vehicles; 689 purchases were grant funded during 2021. Grants of up to €7,500 per vehicle were also provided to support the upgrading of vehicles to wheelchair accessibility; 379 upgrades were grant funded during 2021.

Supporting the SPSV services during Covid-19



Supported the SPSV industry throughout the pandemic, providing regulatory, financial, technical and safety advice, including aiding the reopening of vehicle testing centres and facilitating the SPSV Driver Infection Prevention Control training programme. Also enacted a wide range of regulations in areas including temporarily extending the maximum permissible age of vehicles, doubling the period of time a licence can be inactive, extending the SPSV licence fee waiver and deferring the reintroduction of reduced late fees.

Much has changed and much has been achieved

Expanded ticketing and Leap top-up options



The introduction of the TFI Go app has provided mobile ticketing on 87 regional and commuter routes. Separately, Leap card functionality was also enhanced including to launch the new Leap Top Up App for iPhones in 2021.

Public transport fare reductions



In the first half of 2022, the NTA implemented a temporary 20% average fare reduction for PSO services as part of the Government's measures to help combat the rising cost of living. In May 2022, the NTA launched a Young Adult Card with a 50% transport fare reduction for people aged 19-23 on all subsidised public transport journeys. This was extended to commercial licensed bus services in September 2022.

A decrease in Leap card fares on Nitelink bus services in Dublin was introduced in September 2022.

Leap card scheme reaches milestones



In September 2022 sales of TFI Leap cards reached 6 million and the 1 billionth passenger journey was recorded on TFI Leap cards in October 2022. Total fare revenue on TFI Leap cards has now exceeding €2 billion since its launch in December 2011.

Cyber security



The NTA maintains very strong cyber controls across all of its systems and data repositories, in line with industry and emerging best practices. For the duration of the last Statement of Strategy, the NTA reported no major cyber incidents.

Stakeholder engagement



The Authority has significant public engagement, with over 100 press releases and responses provided to approx. 2,000 information requests (Freedom of Information, Parliamentary Questions etc.) each year.

TFI 90-minute fare



In November 2021, a revamping of the fare system in Dublin took place allowing passengers free transfer between Dublin Bus, Luas and most DART, commuter rail and Go-Ahead Ireland services in Dublin within 90 minutes of initial touch on. A similar 90 minute fare is planned for the regional cities as part of the BusConnects Programme.

National maximum taxi fare review



Every two years NTA conducts a national maximum taxi fare review based on driver and user surveys, encompassing a public consultation, economic analysis, and appraisal of typical operational costs. This results in updating of the taxi fare regulations so that prices remain properly reflective of economic conditions. A consultation on the national taxi fare was completed in May 2022 and an increased national maximum taxi fare was introduced in September 2022.

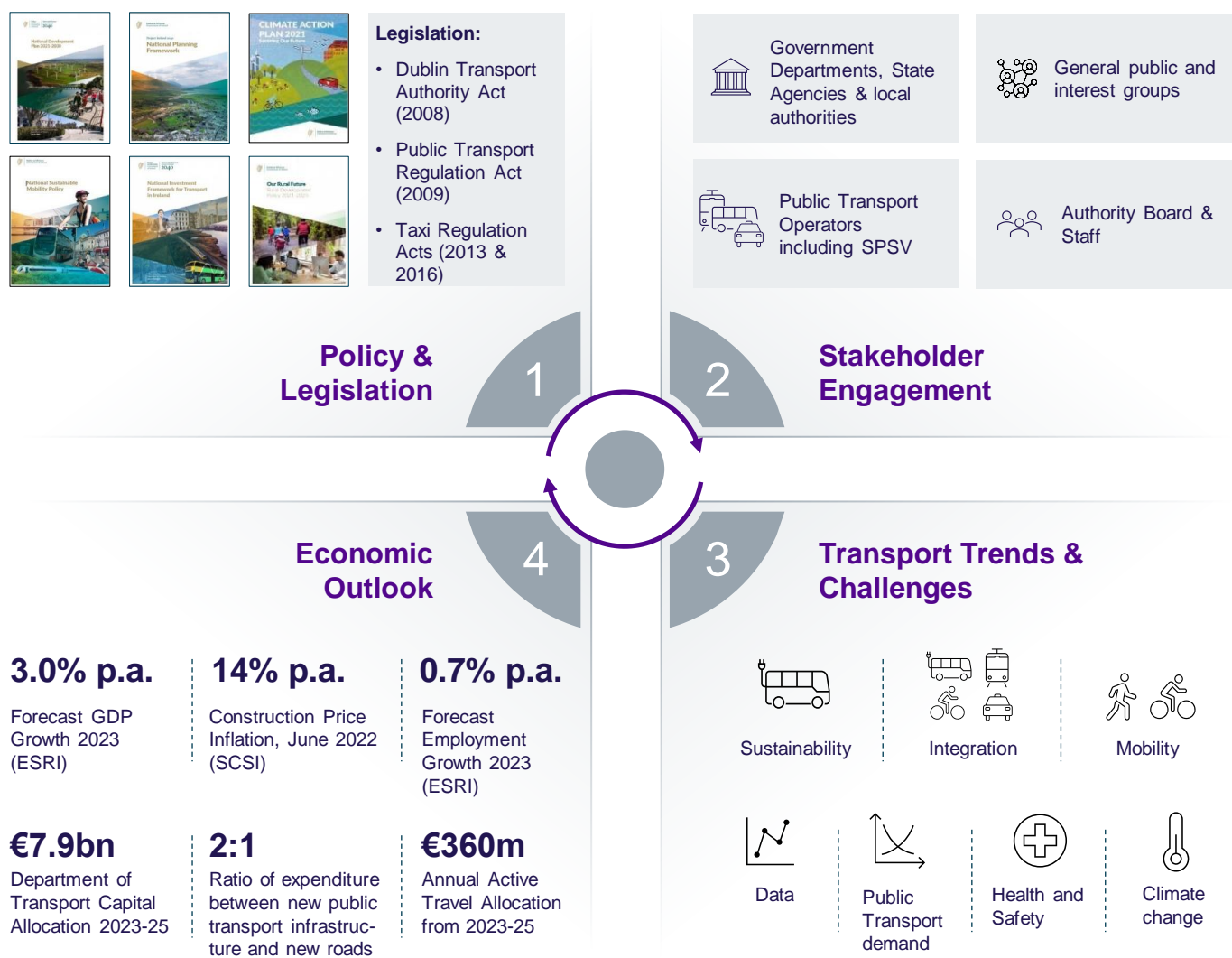
Strategy development



Strategy development approach

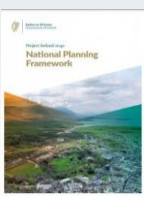
In the development of its Statement of Strategy, the Authority has followed a structured process, giving careful consideration to a wide range of stakeholders, existing policies and legislation, current and forecast economic conditions, as well as transport trends and challenges. Below, we've outlined a high level overview of the approach undertaken in developing the strategy.

1. Assessed relevant policies and the Authority's legislative remit
2. Engaged with stakeholders including relevant Government Departments, other State entities, public transport operators, interest groups and the general public
3. Considered current transport trends and challenges
4. Reviewed the economic outlook for the country, including the budget allocation for transport

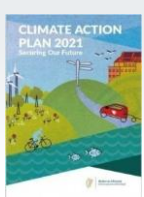


Policy backdrop

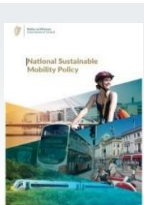
Key Relevant Policies



- The **National Planning Framework** (“NPF”) sets out Ireland’s overarching spatial strategy for the next twenty years, providing a guide to public and private investment to help achieve key national strategic outcomes including compact growth and enhanced regional connectivity.
- The NPF is supported by the **National Development Plan 2021-30** (“NDP”) which sets out the Government’s investment strategy for the relevant period, and includes plans for: the growing use of carbon taxes; Public Spending Code reform; climate and environmental assessments on all significant investments; and a renewed focus on project delivery.
- Major public transport capital projects planned for include BusConnects, MetroLink and DART+. Significant active travel investment is also planned.
- The NDP includes a focus on housing delivery through the Housing for All Strategy. Under the NDP, strategic land use planning is to be aligned with a transport-led housing development approach, facilitating sustainable and well-connected communities.



- **The Climate Action Plan 2021** (“CAP 21”) provides a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland’s carbon emissions by 2030 and to reach net zero by no later than 2050. This includes plans for increased public transport use / active travel, electric car adoption and fleet transition.



- The Department of Transport’s **National Sustainable Mobility Policy** sets out a strategic framework for walking, cycling and public transport to support Ireland’s climate ambitions.
- The NTA will play a key role in delivering on the goals of the policy, including ensuring continued mobility safety, decarbonising public transport and increasing sustainable mobility options.



- The Department of Transport’s **National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland** (NIFTI) sets out a framework for the prioritisation of future investment in the land transport network to support the delivery of the NPF and NDP.



- **Our Rural Future 2021-25** is the Government’s national rural development policy, setting out a blueprint for policy making and investment in rural Ireland.
- The NTA’s role in delivering this policy will include the expansion of Local Link services through Connecting Ireland, assisting local authorities in the delivery of active travel infrastructure and improving rural public transport services, sometimes through pilot initiatives.

Stakeholder engagement and economic outlook

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement



- Whilst there has been ongoing and extensive engagement with the Authority's Board and senior management team throughout the development of this strategy, the Authority's formal stakeholder engagement process ran for two weeks in June 2022. This process was designed to accommodate three distinct consultation strands, all running concurrently via the Authority's online consultation portal. These strands consisted of the following:
 - A survey designed for members of the public;
 - A survey designed for a broad range of stakeholders including Government Departments, state agencies, transport operators, local and regional authorities, the business sector and wider community and voluntary sector; and
 - A survey designed for NTA staff.
- Feedback from this consultation process focused largely on reducing transport sector emissions through promoting more sustainable modes of transport, areas which this Statement of Strategy has addressed in detail.
- The Authority greatly appreciates the time and effort involved by all who made submissions, which helped inform this strategy document.

Economic Outlook

Economic Outlook



- Although overall growth expectations have been lowered as a result of the ongoing Ukraine war / energy crisis, strong economic growth is still expected for 2023 with the ESRI forecasting GDP growth of 3.0%.
- The spike in energy prices has also triggered higher inflation, with the latest Central Bank research forecasting inflation of 8.0% in 2022, moderating to 6.3% in 2023 and 2.8% in 2024. This will create particular challenges for the energy intensive construction and transport sectors. This heightened economic uncertainty damages consumer confidence, creates challenges for fiscal policy and has the potential to impact government funding.
- The inflation associated with key building and construction components observed over the past 12-24 months is a growing concern for the Irish construction industry and Government, impacting on the delivery cost of construction projects, including transport projects.

Public transport investment and funding



- Under the updated National Development Plan 2021-30, allocated public investment in transport is €7.9bn for the period 2023-25.
- Combined with cost inflation, the introduction of a number of fare discounts (incl. the youth travel card and the 20% temporary fare reduction) in part to mitigate the cost of living increases, will significantly increase the requirement for PSO funding of public transport services going forward.

Transport trends and challenges

Trends

Sustainability



- The Transport sector is at the forefront of climate action and the transition of our society to carbon neutrality.
- Key measures being taken by public transport authorities include accelerating the shift from private vehicles to more sustainable modes of transport plus fleet transition to more carbon neutral sources of energy.

Integration



- Greater integration of transport modes (via cross-modal links and effective route planning) is required to maximise ease and efficiency for passengers in terms of cost, comfort, safety and accessibility. This encompasses integration of urban, regional and rural transport systems.

Mobility



- Enhanced mobility through the integration of public and private transport systems using technology can provide better connectedness, accessibility and customer experience.
- Active travel provides flexible, cost-effective transport solutions, with the additional benefits of sustainability, decongestion and well-being.

Data



- The use of data and digitalisation can enhance public transport provision by improving travel times and reliability for customers, efficiencies and improved cost control for public transport operators.
- The Authority will foster smart data usage and innovation, and work to leverage travel data as a tool to inform its strategic decision-making.

Challenges

Public Transport Demand



- Public transport demand patterns have seen significant changes in the last five years, in particular as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The advent of work-from-home has changed the distribution of commuting, with transport demand shifting away from the morning and evening peaks, towards being distributed throughout the day.

Health & Safety



- As a public-facing service, public transport needs to implement all necessary mitigation measures to ensure passengers feel safe on public transport. This includes continuous efforts to address incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Climate Change



- Climate change poses a significant long-term challenge to the resilience of the Irish transport network through the increasing frequency of extreme weather events such as floods and storms.
- In addition, the costs associated with fleet transition and compliance will add significant costs to the industry in the short to medium term.

Labour Market

- Labour shortages in the professional services and construction sectors, combined with recruitment challenges for transport operators are likely to have an impact on the NTA's ability to deliver on infrastructure projects and public transport service provision, both of which are set to ramp up in terms of scale and activity in the coming years.

Looking forward strategically



Mission, vision and values

Mission



To connect Ireland's people and places, by providing sustainable transport infrastructure and services as well as working to reduce transport demand, all helping to lower carbon emissions

Vision



In fulfilling our mission, our vision is to be:

- 1 Recognised by the public as being effective in the provision of high quality, accessible, sustainable, transport infrastructure and services
- 2 Respected by our stakeholders as credible and working constructively to help shape the best outcomes, including reducing carbon emissions
- 3 Known as an organisation that provides our people with the opportunity to reach their potential and build fulfilling careers, while feeling valued in an environment that supports diversity and inclusion

Values



The values held by the Authority guide how we behave and our decision making process. We will deliver on our strategy while holding dear our core values as set out below.

Sustainability

We are climate conscious and will ensure that our activities are as sustainable as possible, fostering increased use of sustainable transport at every opportunity.

Customer focus

We will continuously focus on our customers, serving them by maintaining high standards while utilising technology and innovation to deliver integrated and accessible transport solutions.

Leadership through collaboration

We will be leaders in the public transport sector, focussed on achieving the best outcomes for the public, through teamwork and collaboration with our stakeholders.

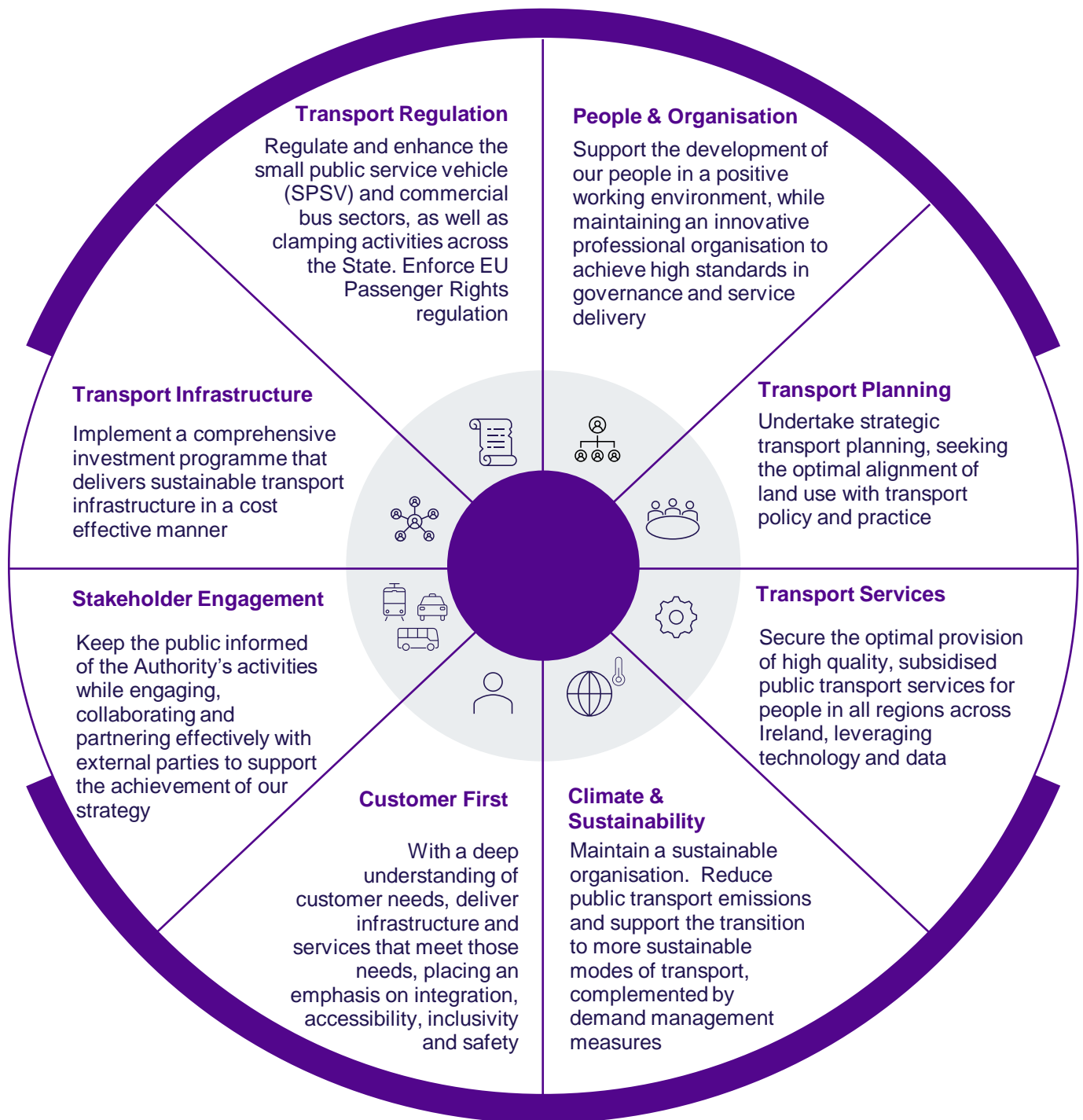
Trust

We will build trust and deliver value for money through integrity, transparency, good governance and accountability.

Our people

We will cultivate and maintain a working environment which is respectful and embraces diversity and inclusion, enabling our people to reach their potential and best perform their roles.

Goals



In addition, the NTA has developed a set of underlying strategic objectives which will support the delivery of these goals as outlined overleaf.

Strategic objectives

In the pursuit of delivering on the NTA's goals, each goal has been assigned several strategic objectives which are to be achieved over the life of the strategy. Set out below are the strategic objectives aligned to their respective goals, which are to be achieved during 2023-25.

Customer First

1. Continue developing a deep understanding of customer needs to help ensure the infrastructure and services delivered, effectively address those needs;
2. Continuously improve transport integration to provide customers with an easy to use public transport network and a seamless end-to-end journey experience;
3. Ensure an emphasis on accessibility so that infrastructure and services are available to all, including the elderly and people with disabilities;
4. To enhance inclusivity, proactively engage with different user groups to inform improvements that meet their specific needs; and
5. Prioritise safety on infrastructure and services for customers and staff alike.

Climate & Sustainability

1. Continuously improve organisational sustainability and efficiency, on the journey towards becoming climate neutral;
2. Enable a reduction in public transport emissions in collaboration with sector stakeholders;
3. Support a modal shift from the private car to more sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport;
4. Promote sustainable transport in workplaces, campuses, schools and communities; and
5. Design and implement effective transport demand management measures.

Transport Planning

1. Foster and develop enhanced integration between transport provision and land use planning;
2. Develop regional transport strategies, providing a framework for integrated transport development and investment; and
3. Develop and maintain guidance and tools to support transport planning and transport investment decisions.

Transport Infrastructure

1. Ensure the effective delivery of the Authority's Capital Investment Programme;
2. Manage effectively the Department of Transport's investment programmes assigned to the Authority; and
3. Develop and maintain guidance and training to support infrastructure development and delivery.

Strategic objectives

Transport Services

1. Continue to develop a Public Service Obligation (PSO) framework that sets out the key priorities and provides direction on the future development of the PSO services;
2. Continue to enhance the network of public transport services, responding to customers changing needs;
3. Procure high-quality and accessible bus, heavy rail and light rail services, through direct award and publicly tendered contracts, always ensuring value for money;
4. Effectively manage the delivery of contracted public transport services, maintaining robust measures to ensure reliability, punctuality and customer service standards are continuously improved; and
5. Leverage latest technologies and data insights to continuously enhance services and customer experience.

Transport Regulation

1. Enhance quality consumer services, having due regard to the protection of all users and providers;
2. Advance the regulatory licensing frameworks for the SPSV and commercial bus sectors in order to improve the quality, sustainability and accessibility of services;
3. Mature the compliance and enforcement regimes in the SPSV and commercial bus sectors;
4. Regulate clamping activities to ensure adequate consumer protection, together with appropriate traffic management; and
5. Promote the regulation of EU Passenger Rights for public transport across the road, rail and maritime sectors.

Stakeholder Engagement

1. Effectively communicate to the public on the Authority's programme of work;
2. Build awareness of the Authority's role in delivering effective, sustainable transport solutions;
3. Develop and maintain strong relationships with sector stakeholders;
4. Effectively facilitate and engage with the Advisory Committee on Small Public Service Vehicles and the Transport Users Advisory Group; and
5. Effectively respond to and proactively engage with Oireachtas and local authority members.

People & Organisation

1. Ensure we have the right people, culture and capabilities to deliver the Authority's programme of work;
2. Provide comprehensive training and development support, helping enable people to reach their potential;
3. Embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in our work environment so that people of all backgrounds and cultures can feel comfortable and work together effectively;
4. Maintain high standards in governance and service delivery; and
5. Continuously develop and invest in cyber security defences.

How will we
deliver?



Delivery environment and strategic risks

Delivery environment

- The Authority's activities are subject to extensive compliance requirements including the EU public procurement directives, the Public Spending Code, the Dept. of Transport's Common Appraisal Framework and the NIFTI. Whilst such policies and measures are necessary to ensure that value for money is achieved, they require high levels of rigour and can be time intensive, sometimes slowing delivery.
- Strong economic growth following on from Covid-19 has led to considerable skill shortages in the transport and construction sectors, impacting service and infrastructure delivery. The energy crisis prompted by the Ukraine war has contributed to significant cost inflation, most notably around construction. These challenges can slow delivery and increase costs.

Key mitigants

- To minimise delays on the delivery of services and infrastructure, the Authority will carefully plan for medium-term staffing requirements, making every effort to ensure the required delivery capability is in place when required. Where activity levels are scaled up, capability and resourcing will need to be increased accordingly, in a timely manner.
- To mitigate the skill shortages, the Authority will seek to implement a consistent but flexible approach to tendering projects, making them as market friendly as possible whilst ensuring value for money is delivered. The Authority will also coordinate with wider Government around appropriate initiatives to address the shortage of skilled workers in the transport and construction sectors, in part to minimize the impact of construction inflation on the capital investment programme.

Strategic risks

The Board identified the Authority's strategic risks as set out below, which received careful consideration during the preparation of this Statement of Strategy. The Authority operates a robust risk management framework to manage and mitigate these strategic risks.

- Excessive project delivery costs;
- Delayed funding of future projects and initiatives;
- Significant service disruption;
- Failure of a critical IT system (either in NTA or third party service providers);
- A major safety incident occurs on the national transport network for which the Authority is responsible;
- Suboptimal customer experience of public transport services;
- Inadequate capacity and capabilities to deliver projects efficiently and effectively;
- Not reaching climate action and sustainability objectives; and
- Significant governance incident associated with a financial decision / award of contract.

Measuring progress

To measure the Authority's progress in delivering on the Statement of Strategy, a suite of assessment tools and metrics related to the organisational goals will be utilised throughout the life of the strategy.

Goal	Examples of assessment tools and metrics
Customer First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transport customer satisfaction research Mystery passenger surveys Feedback received via customer service channels, incl. customer complaints
Climate & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of journeys by sustainable modes Development of demand management strategies Percentage of PSO fleet comprising low/zero emission vehicles Level of engagement with behavioural change programme
Transport Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of transport strategies including town transport plans Engagement with land use planning of major development areas / sites Guidance documentation and information dissemination to support integrated land use and transport development
Transport Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kilometres of cycling infrastructure delivered Milestones in relation to bus infrastructure development – planning consent status; tendering status; construction status; fleet Milestones in relation to rail infrastructure development – as above Guidance documentation and training to support infrastructure development including project assessment and project appraisal
Transport Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicle kilometres operated, plus reliability and punctuality of services Service proximity index for BusConnects networks Mobile Apps downloads / active users
Transport Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistics on fleet profile – age, accessibility, emissions etc. Percentage of licensed vehicles and drivers checked for compliance annually Number of clamping appeals processed annually Success rate for prosecutions taken
Stakeholder Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National brand awareness of NTA, TFI and TFI Local Link Level of engagement with stakeholders including public consultations, briefings with representative organisations, conference addresses, appearances at local authority meetings and Oireachtas committees and parliamentary questions responded to Stakeholder feedback surveys
People & Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee culture and satisfaction surveys Diversity reporting including gender pay balance Staff satisfaction with training and development programme Compliance with governance requirements Value for money reviews Cyber security KPIs

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