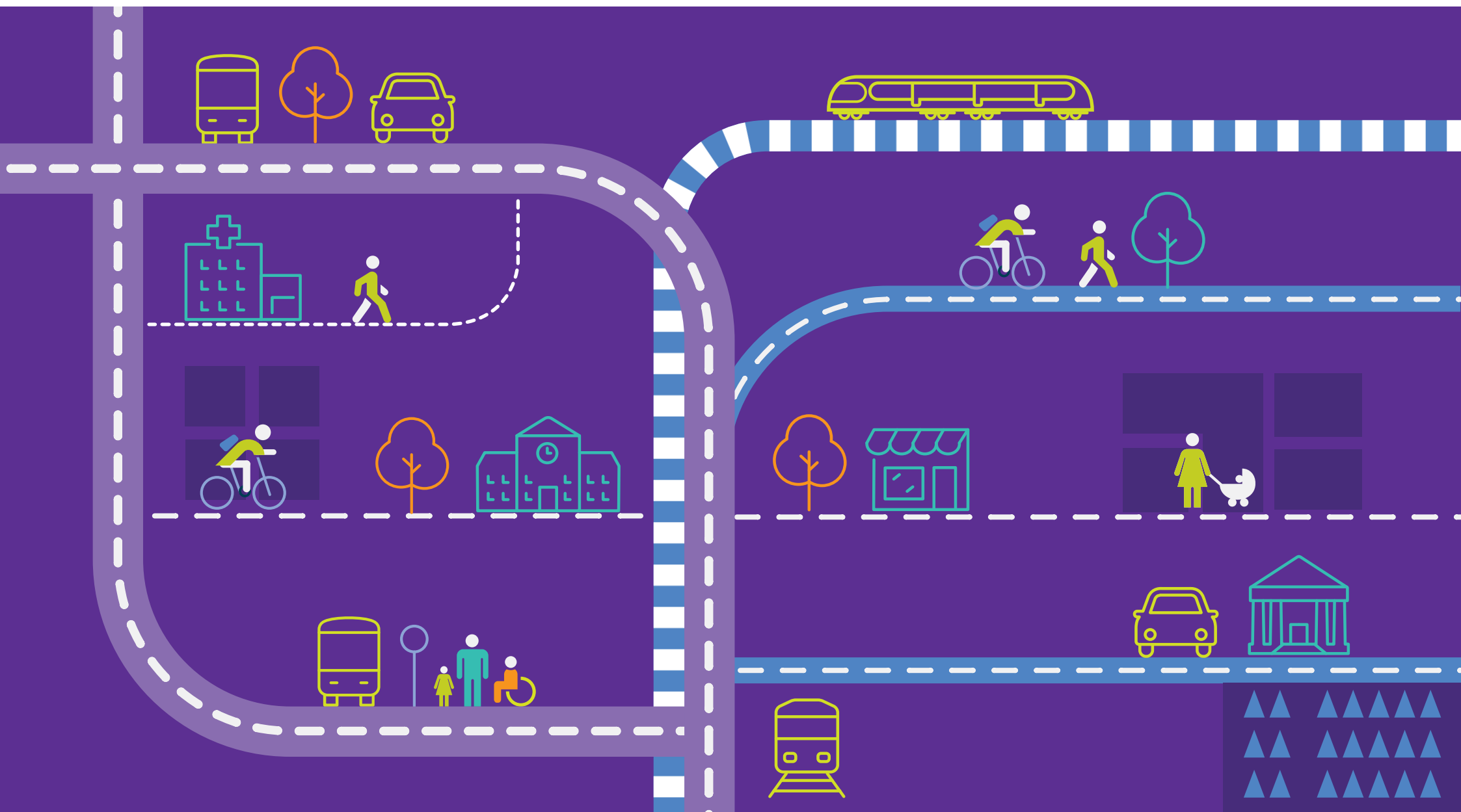


# AREA-BASED TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT AND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE NOTICE





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# 1.0 Purpose of Advice Note

## 1.1. Introduction

The purpose of this advice note is to provide further brief guidance on the application of the Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) guidance, and associated suite of documentation, published by the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in 2018.

Since the publication of these documents, a number of Local Transport Plans (LTPs), formulated using the ABTA methodology, have been prepared under the NTA's LTP Programme. This has provided an opportunity to review progress to date and lessons learned. In particular, the NTA and TII would like to clarify the governance and consultation arrangements around the undertaking of ABTAs.

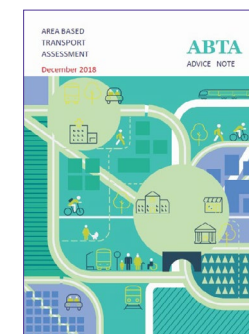
The NTA hosted a number of workshops with TII, and public and private sector practitioners of the ABTA methodology, in order to explore the issues that have arisen in the application of the ABTA methodology and to identify this further advice on its application.



## 1.2. Key Messages

The key messages of this advice note are as follows:

1. The NTA must be included on the Steering Group for all ABTAs for which the NTA are a funding agency;
2. It is recommended that the NTA are closely involved throughout all other ABTAs;
3. TII should be consulted at the outset and early stages of the process, and when a draft LTP has been prepared prior to its publication;
4. An ABTA should be undertaken alongside the preparation of all land use plans which set the framework for development, and should inform the land use plan;
5. Tenders should be bespoke for each ABTA reflecting the character and nature of each area being examined; and
6. In establishing teams to manage an ABTA within a local authority, a senior planner from the forward planning section should be included alongside a senior transport planner or engineer.



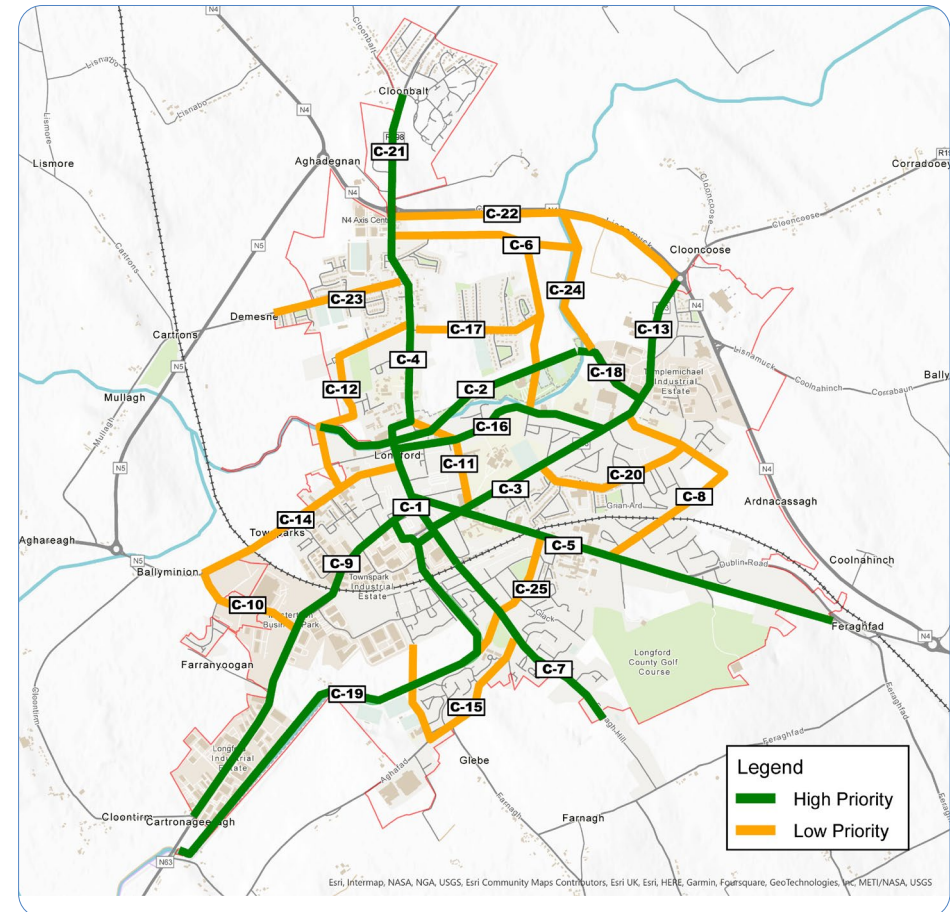
**NTA and TII ABTA How to Guide and Advice Note, 2018**

## 2. Definitions

Based on recent implementation experience it is necessary to clarify the purpose and role of Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTAs) and Local Transport Plans (LTPs), as follows:

- An ABTA is a process undertaken in order identify transport objectives, transport networks and associated transport measures for a settlement; and
- An LTP is a report summarising the outcome of an ABTA. It sets down the transport objectives, transport networks and associated transport measures for a settlement as defined during the ABTA process, and should be fully reflected in land use plans.

The next section focuses on governance arrangements for ABTAs funded by the NTA.



*Sample Prioritised Cycle Network Plan, Longford LTP*

## 3. ABTA Governance

### 3.1. Steering Group

In the case of ABTAs funded by the NTA, a steering group should be established with the following members:

- › Local Authority Planners, Active Travel Officers and Transport Engineers;
- › NTA Transport Planner; and
- › Consultant team.

### 3.2. Stages and Approval Points

The following approval points will apply for all NTA-funded ABTAs and associated LTP:

0. Tender – Preparation and Assessment;
1. Baseline – Inception and Baseline Report;
2. Context – Future Context and ABTA Objectives;
3. Measures – Networks Development, Identification and Assessment of Measures;
4. Preferred Plan – Preparation of Preliminary Draft LTP; and
5. Final Plan – Consultation and Finalisation of LTP.

Figure 3.1 overleaf sets out the steps and interaction points with the NTA and TII as part of the ABTA process, as well as further elaboration on the outputs at each stage. (While this directly relates to ABTAs funded by the NTA, local authorities are advised to engage with both NTA and TII in this manner for all ABTAs.)

Alongside these stages, the NTA and TII will be formally engaged in the statutory land use planning process as prescribed bodies. The ABTA process should only progress as these stages are completed and agreed with the NTA.

In terms of expenditure and quantum of work per stage, the NTA would place emphasis on ensuring that a high proportion of the cost of the ABTA would relate to the substantive elements of transport planning, i.e. determining the networks; assessment of options; and assessing the merits of the final preferred plan, with less focus on data-gathering, policy reviews and baseline reporting. Figure 3.2 sets this out.

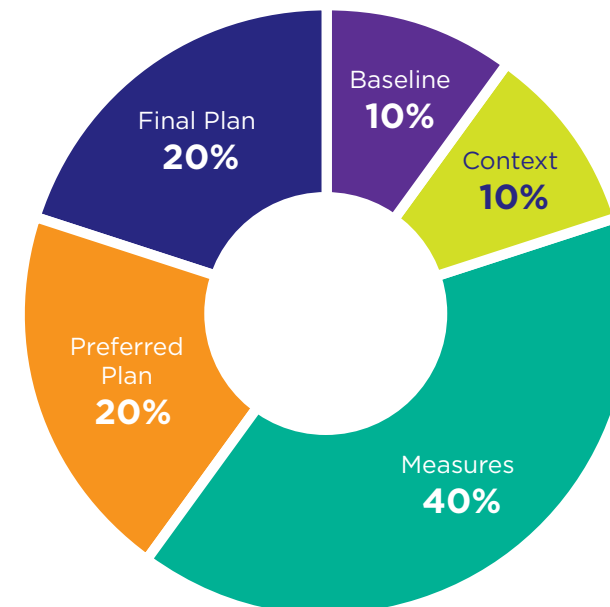


Figure 3.2 – Process for NTA-Funded ABTAs

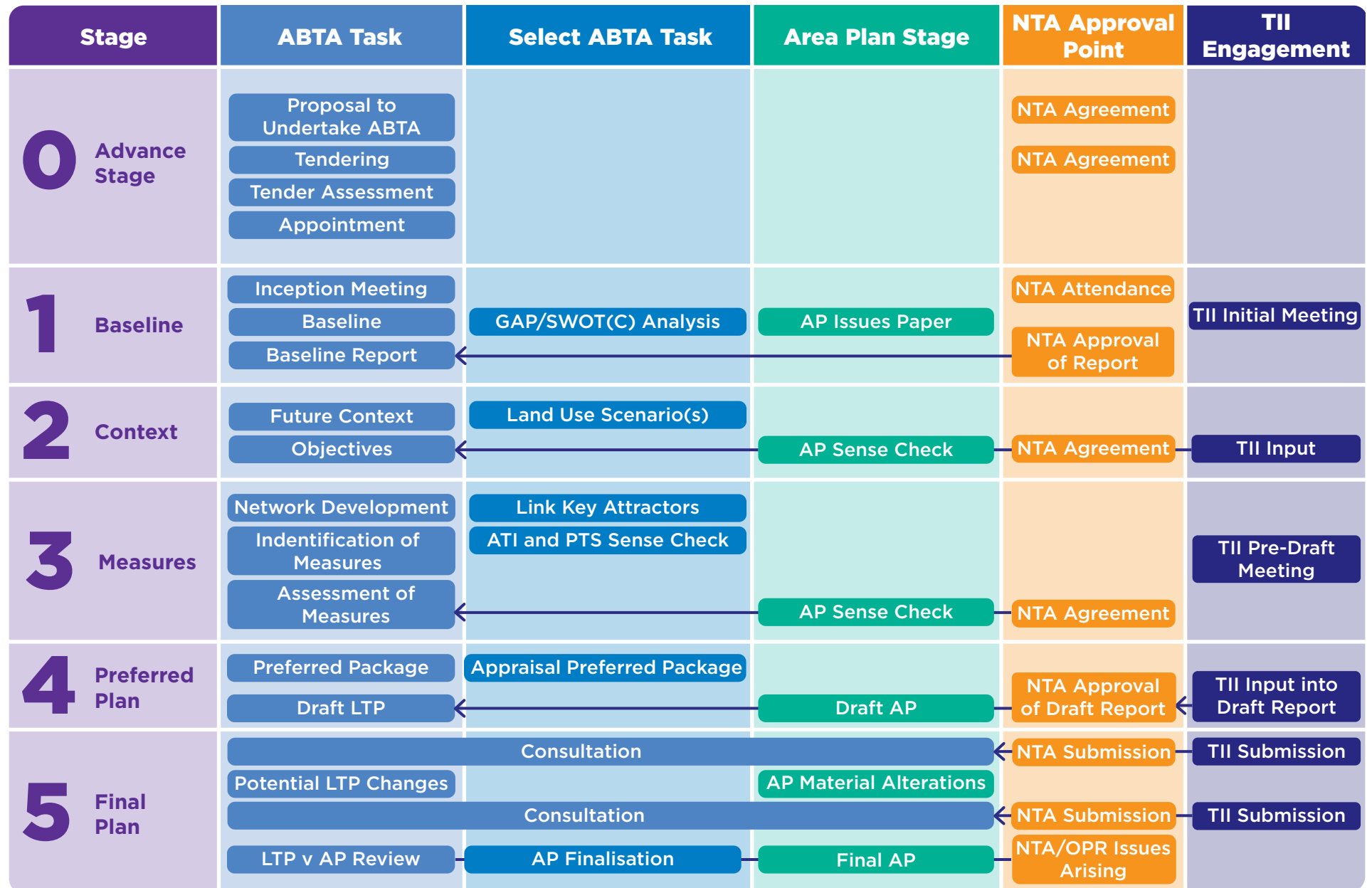


Figure 3.1 – Process for NTA-Funded ABTAs



### 3.3. Consultation with TII

There are two main stages where TII must be consulted as part of the ABTA process, as follows:

1. At the outset of the ABTA when the Baseline and Objectives are being prepared; and
2. In advance of a draft LTP being published.

Similar to the NTA, TII will be formally engaged in the land use planning process as a prescribed body nationally, where plans may impact on national roads and existing light rail. Figure 3.1 also incorporates TII's role in the ABTA process.

While this section relates specifically to those ABTAs funded by the NTA, it is recommended that a version of this engagement is undertaken for all ABTAs. This is in order to ensure insofar as it possible, that both the NTA and TII are satisfied that the studies, and any associated land use plans, are consistent with national and regional transport policies and objectives.



Sample Workshop Material Long Listing of Options, Mullingar LTP



## 4. Relationship to National and Regional Plans

### 4.1 ABTA and LTPs in the Transport and Planning Hierarchy

The ABTA process and resultant LTP represents the lowest tier of the National Planning Framework (NPF) for the integration of land use and transport planning and the achievement of compact smart growth. The purpose of the ABTA is as follows:

- › to ensure that the assessment of transport demand and its associated impact plays a central role in informing future development proposals,
- › to fully integrate land use planning and transport planning at the earliest stages of plan preparation,
- › to support a shift to sustainable modes based on the road user hierarchy; and
- › to set a framework for investment in transport infrastructure within the settlement which is appropriately informed by both analysis and policy.

It is essential, therefore, that the objectives and measures in the LTP reflect higher level transport policies and priorities and that there is a clear demonstrable link in each LTP to this hierarchy (Figure 4.1). It is by this pathway that land use planning can fully account for, and be fully integrated with, transport planning at the local level. This is set out in more detail in Section 5.

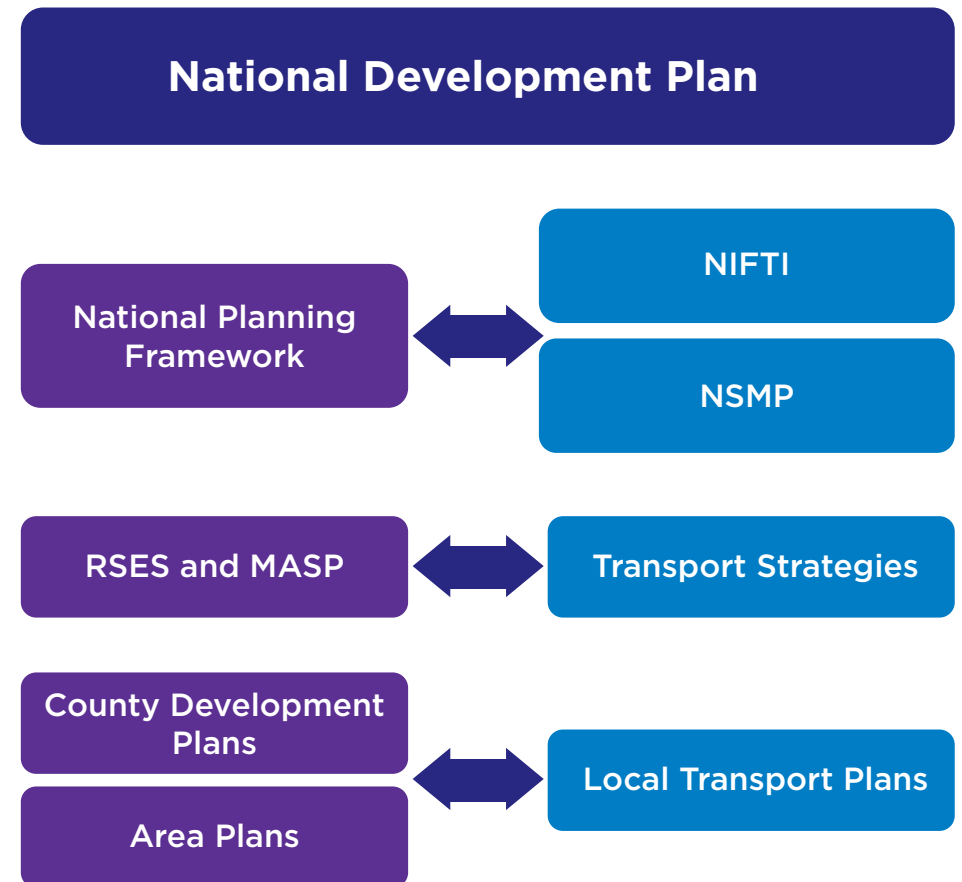


Figure 4.1 – LTPs in the Transport and Land Use Planning Hierarchy

# 5. Relationship to Local Land Use Plans

## 5.1. Overview

NTA's experience of the ABTA programme to date has covered the vast majority of Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns set out in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) for the three Regional Assemblies. Some have been undertaken for smaller settlements and for parts of metropolitan areas. In most cases, an ABTA has formed part of the Local Area Plan (LAP) process with a Draft LTP being published alongside the Draft LAP and finalised accordingly. In other cases, the ABTA has occurred well in advance of the LAP and has fed into its preparation. While both methods are acceptable, a fully integrated process is more likely to produce optimal land use plans and LTPs.

For those settlements for which LAPs are not prepared or for smaller settlements where the transport issues and potential solutions are less complex than for Regional Growth Centres or Key Towns, it is recommended that the NTA is consulted at the earliest scoping stage of the transport planning work in order to determine the applicability of the ABTA method and in order to ensure that the scope of any emerging ABTA is appropriate.



## 5.2. Local Authority Team

An essential aspect of the ABTA process is the iteration between land use planning and urban design considerations, transport planning and traffic management matters. As such, the NTA and TII have found that in establishing teams to manage an ABTA within a local authority, it is critical that the team include a senior planner as well as a senior transport planner or engineer.

Wider consultation with other teams, as deemed appropriate, should also take place. Examples would be Active Travel and/or Greenway Teams, Parks, Architects and Heritage, given the potential for an LTP to contain proposals which may impact on these areas.

## 5.3. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA)

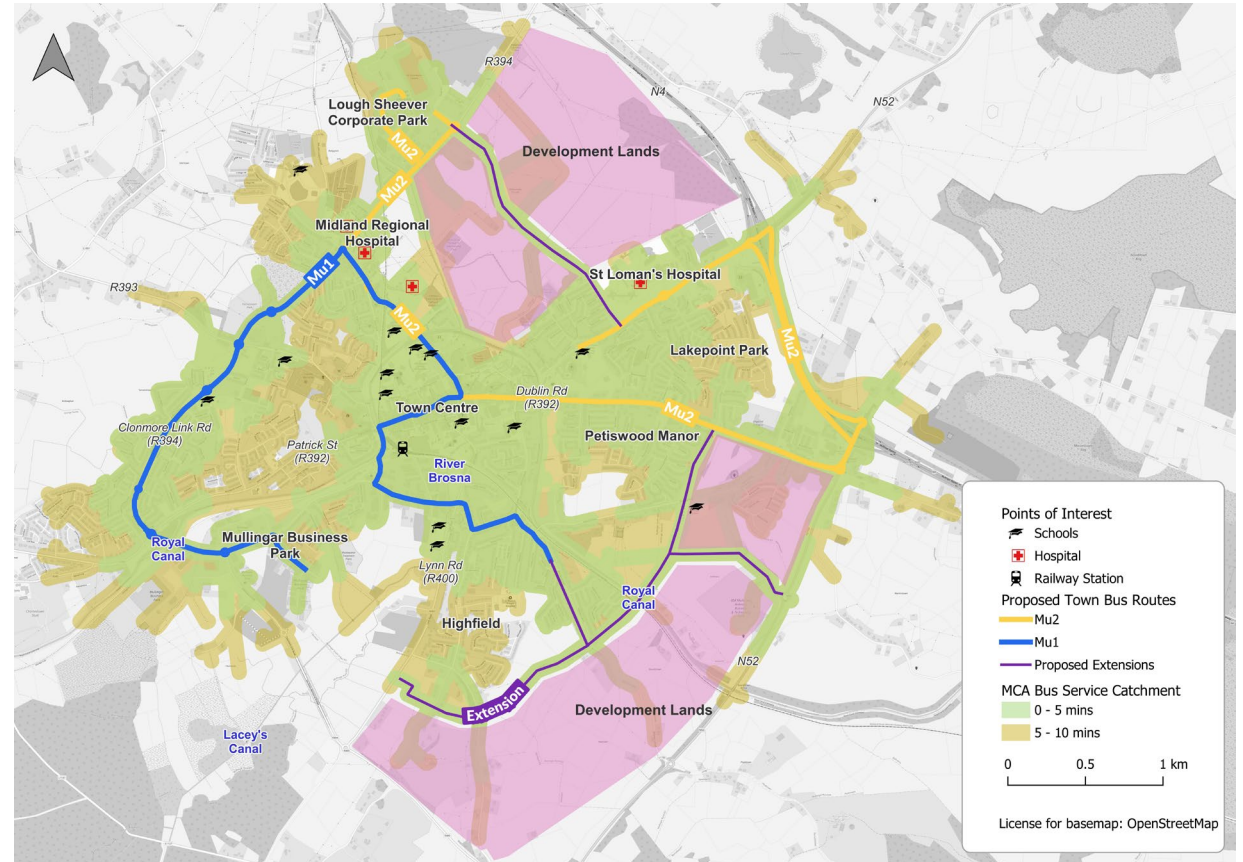
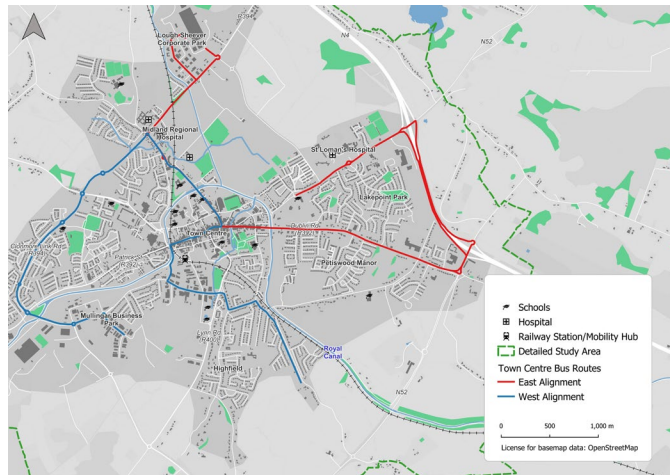
For ABTAs undertaken as part of a land use plan, the requirements for SEA and AA are accommodated as part of the land use plan (in the case of the current LAP process, as long as the two areas are coterminous). Further SEA or AA work specifically for the ABTA is therefore not required.

For those ABTAs which are undertaken without a land use plan, and which are intended to be finalised as standalone plans and studies, the Local Authority should ensure any requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directive are satisfied.

# Public Transport Options

## Town centre bus services - catchment

### Town centre bus services



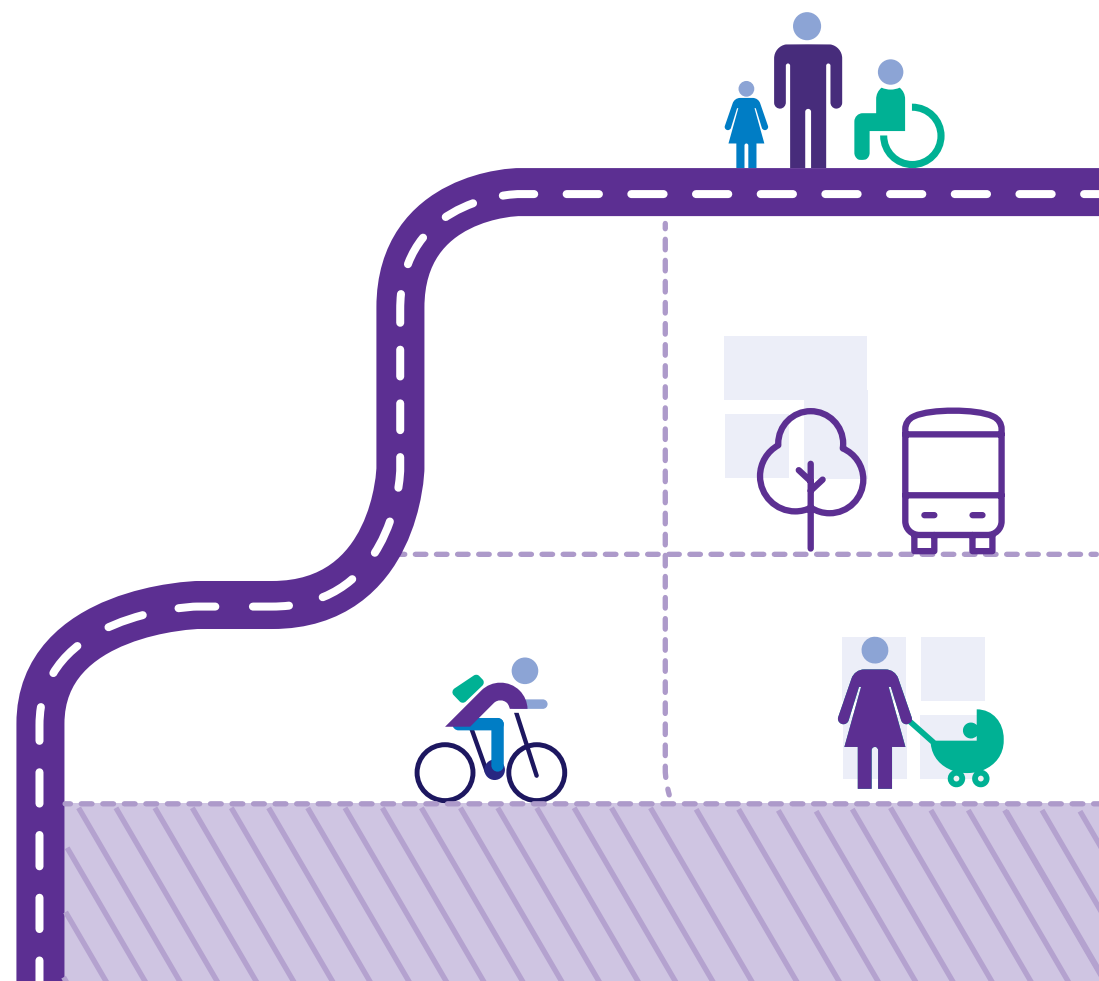
*Sample Options for Indicative Extension to Proposed NTA Town Bus Service, Mullingar LTP*

## 6. Appointment of Consultants and Tendering

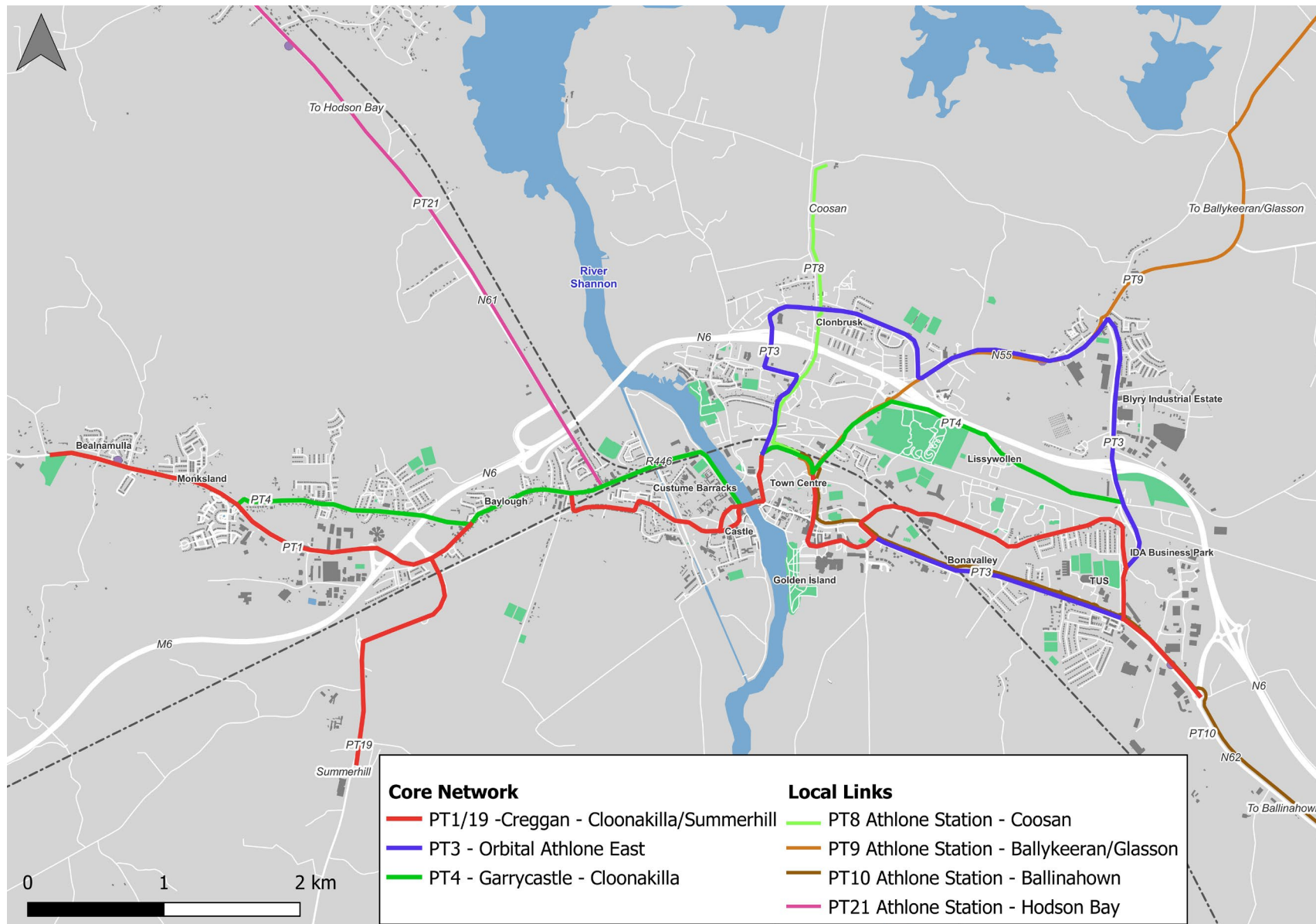
When tendering for an ABTA, local authorities should fully consider all aspects of the task in order to ensure that a bespoke tender is developed which reflects the specific characteristics and requirements of each settlement. For example, for a smaller settlement, there is less potential for large-scale radical interventions, such as closing streets to general traffic, than there would be for larger settlements with more options for traffic management and redistribution. Therefore, the level of transport modelling required may be quite low for ABTAs in smaller settlements, and in many cases there may be no need for such analysis.

Similarly, the extent of public consultation and SEA/AA requirements should be fully thought through in advance of tendering; specifically, the extent to which potential service providers may be involved.

As set out in Figure 3.1, for NTA funded ABTAs, the approval of the tender documents is a key approval point. For other ABTAs, NTA input is recommended.





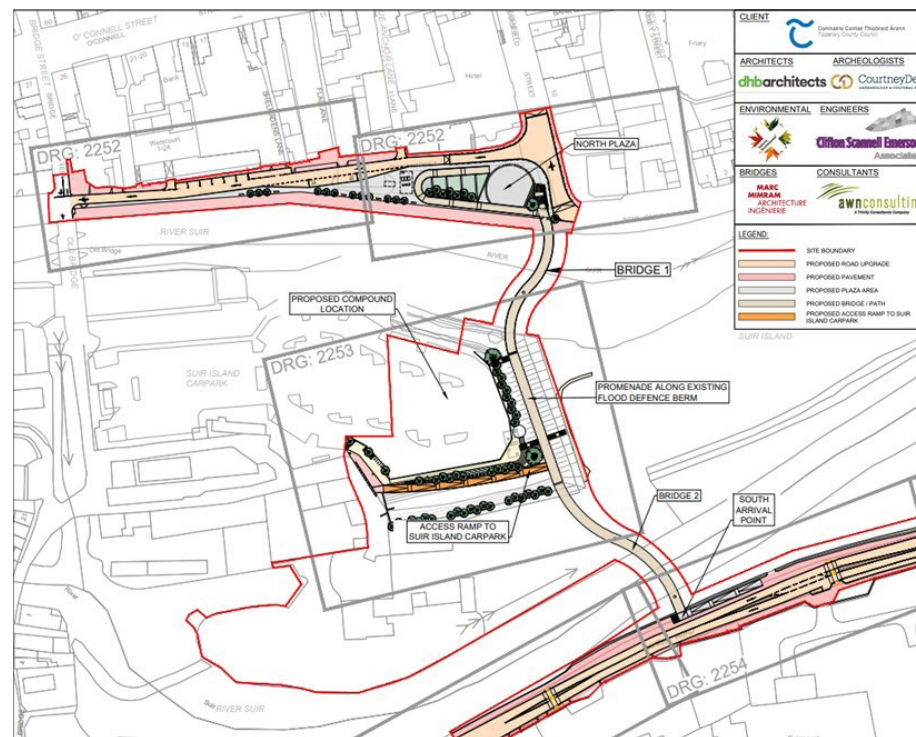


Sample Options for Indicative Long-Term Public Transport Network, Athlone LTP

## 7. Next Steps

The NTA, with TII, will issue further guidance on the technical aspects of the ABTA methodology, based on experience and feedback from the workshops undertaken in 2023. In advance of this guidance being issued, NTA and TII will continue, on a case-by-case basis, to facilitate the evolution of ABTAs and associated LTPs as they proceed based on the existing guidance.

Of particular importance in this will be the changes to the Local Area Plan and Development Plan processes arising from the new Planning Act, in particular in the manner in which land use zoning, i.e., the future demand which needs to be served, is undertaken, as well as any requirements which may emerge from the National Demand Management Strategy.



Sample Scheme Detail of Existing Active Travel Proposal, Clonmel LTP







**National Transport Authority**

Dún Scéine  
Harcourt Lane  
Dublin 2  
D02 WT20

**Údarás Náisiúnta Iompair**

Dún Scéine  
Lána Fhearchair  
Baile Átha Cliath 2  
D02 WT20

Tel: +353 1 879 8300

Fax: +353 1 879 8333

[www.nationaltransport.ie](http://www.nationaltransport.ie)