

Moving Together: A Strategic Approach to the Improved Efficiency of the Transport System in Ireland

The Regional Assembly welcomes this public consultation on the draft National Transport Demand Management Strategy entitled *'Moving Together: A Strategic Approach to the Improved Efficiency of the Transport System in Ireland'* and its accompanying draft Implementation Plan entitled *'Strengthened Implementation of Demand Management across National Planning System'*, both prepared by the Department of Transport. The purpose of the draft National Transport Demand Management Strategy is to manage and reduce traffic congestion, making the country's transport system more efficient for users and to alleviate the impacts of car dependency on the economy, the environment and the health of Irish society.

This submission is tailored to address the key areas of focus and recommendations identified in the draft Strategy, and the subsequent actions identified in its accompanying draft Implementation Plan, and is structured to include an overall context, detailing the role and function of the Regional Assembly and the importance of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

The submission has been prepared by the executive and approved by the Cathaoirleach of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA).

1.0 Overall Context

1.1 Role and Function of the Regional Assembly

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) is part of the regional tier of governance in Ireland. It is primarily focused on driving regional development through the formulation, adoption and implementation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), oversight and coordination of County Development Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans, management of EU Operational Programs, EU project participation, implementation of national economic policy, and additional functions working with the National Oversight and Audit Commission. As a strategic policy body, EMRA also participates in the consultation processes of other relevant strategic plans and policies.

The role and function of the Regional Assembly, including the scope of the RSES, is currently provided for in the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. This legislation is currently under review, and the draft Planning and Development Bill 2023 was approved by Cabinet on 3rd October 2023. This draft Bill is under consideration and due to be enacted into legislation in due course.

Currently, Section 29 (1)(a) of the draft Bill 2023 states that an RSES shall make provision for the identification of sustainable settlement patterns and transportation strategies in urban and rural

areas, and Section 29 (1)(i) relates to the provision of transportation (including public transportation) within the RSES. Furthermore, Section 29 (1)(p) of the draft Bill 2023 states that an RSES shall contain a statement of the actions being taken or proposed for the purpose of ensuring the effective integration of transport and land use planning (in accordance with any relevant transport strategy of the National Transport Authority). Finally, Section 29 (1)(q)(iii) states that an RSES shall contain a statement confirming that the RSES is materially consistent with any relevant national planning policies and measures.

1.2 The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region

The current RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region was made by the Members of the Assembly in June 2019 and is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape future growth throughout the Region. The overall vision of the Strategy is to create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of the people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunity for all. The vision of the RSES is supported by sixteen Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) that are framed around the three key principles of Healthy Placemaking, Climate Action and Economic Opportunity. These Regional Strategic Outcomes are closely aligned with and supportive of the National Strategic Outcomes of the National Planning Framework (NPF).

A primary statutory objective of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework, in accordance with Section 28 (2)(a) of the draft Bill 2023 (and Section 23 (1)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended) and aligning with the investment priorities of the National Development Plan 2021-2030 (and thus Project Ireland 2040), by coupling new development with the requisite investment in services and infrastructure. The RSES is of critical importance for the delivery of Project Ireland 2040, given that it is the succeeding tier of policy delivery in Ireland.

1.3 Ensuring Spatial Alignment

The RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region presents a Spatial Strategy, devised and informed by a complementary Economic Strategy, which provides a framework for future growth, ensuring the delivery of effective regional development through the realisation of viable and vital places. This includes championing the capital city of Dublin as a smart, climate resilient and global city region; securing Athlone, Drogheda and Dundalk as Regional Growth Centres, acting as regional economic drivers and supports for their wider catchment areas; and promoting a network of large economically active Key Towns (which include Swords, Maynooth, Bray, Navan, Naas, Wicklow, Longford, Mullingar, Tullamore and Portlaoise) that provide employment and services to their surrounding areas. All of this is supported by Self-Sustaining Growth Towns, Self-Sustaining Towns and a network of multifaceted Rural Places.

2.0 Submission

The preparation of the draft National Transportation Demand Strategy is centred on six key areas of focus, and the 35 recommendations that have evolved from these. The recommendations, which are detailed in Chapter 10 of the draft Strategy, result in the formation of 66 actions, and these actions are identified in the accompanying draft Implementation Plan.

The key areas of focus are discussed under the following headings:

1. Integrated Land-Use and Transport Planning
2. Optimal Use of Space
3. Fiscal Measures
4. Generators of Demand (Education, Sport, Public Sector and Tourism)
5. Generators of Demand (Retail, Industry and Freight)
6. Captive Car Users

For ease of reference the structure of the submission will outline the key areas of focus identified in the draft Strategy, and will examine the proposed recommendations and the resulting actions in the draft Implementation Plan. A list of recommendations by the Regional Assembly will be summarised in Section 3 of this submission.

It should be noted that the approach of the draft Strategy and the proposed actions are based on the Avoid-Shift-Improve (ASI) Framework. This stems from the Climate Action Plan 2023, in the recognition that achieving climate ambition will require a multi-faceted, integrated and interdependent combination of measures that can change long-established patterns and preferences in how and where people travel. The ASI method may be defined as avoiding the need for car travel (avoid), shifting car travel to more sustainable modes where possible (shift), and improving the carbon emissions for those who have no alternative options but to travel by car (improve).

Furthermore, in the preparation of the draft Strategy, a Steering Committee was established in May 2023 to ensure that there was a whole-of-Government approach to the preparation of the draft Strategy. EMRA formed part of this Steering Committee. In addition, expert sub-groups for each of the six key areas of focus were formed from the Steering Committee members, who identified challenges and types of interventions to overcome these challenges, that informed the recommendations and related actions. EMRA was involved in two sub-groups; integrated land-use and transport planning, and optimal use of space.

2.1 Integrated Land-Use and Transport Planning

The draft Strategy outlines that integrating land use and transport planning is key to ensuring that the built environment is connected in a way that reduces travel demand by private car sustainably. This means setting Government policies that promote compact settlements and discourage urban sprawl; that promote land use patterns that facilitate active travel, decrease the reliance on private cars, and increase the efficiency of existing sustainable transport systems; and the coordination of land use and

transport policy objectives to form complementary intervention measures. In the preparation of the draft Strategy, measures were identified that support these existing Government policies. These include measures that are focused on intensification and diversification; access to services; permeability; evaluating plan and policy efficacy; and behavioural change.

There are two recommendations that emerged from this key area of focus. These are: the strengthening of policy alignment and implementation mechanisms to deliver National Strategic Objectives (NSOs) 1 and 4, 'Compact Growth' and 'Sustainable Mobility', of the National Planning Framework (NPF), given the critical role of compact growth in reducing travel demand and enhancing transport system efficiencies; and the development of a National Parking Data Inventory.

The draft Implementation Plan identifies five actions as a result of these recommendations. These include the publication of the First Revision to the NPF; the development of enhanced implementation mechanisms to support the delivery of NSOs 1 and 4 of the NPF including new institutional governance and funding mechanisms to support the phased alignment of large-scale urban development to major public transport investment; progress legislative enactment of proposals set out in National Policy Objective 69 in the 2018 NPF to extend statutory arrangements between spatial and transport planning in the Greater Dublin Area to other cities for Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies (MASPs); the establishment of a working group to oversee progress for these actions; and establishment of working group to identify an approach to a National Parking Data Inventory. The Regional Assembly is not identified as a lead, co-lead, or stakeholder support on any of these actions.

A draft of the First Revision to the National Planning Framework 2018 is currently on public display and it is anticipated that the First Revision will be adopted in Q4 2024. As mentioned under Section 1.2, the RSES must align with the objectives of the NPF in accordance with planning legislation, and the RSES translates the objectives of the NPF to a regional level. Similarly, the First Revision of the NPF will inform the policies and objectives of the review of the RSES, which is due to commence in 2025.

The current RSES identifies sixteen Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) which are aligned with the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF and are cross-referenced with the three key principles of the RSES (Healthy Placemaking, Climate Action and Economic Opportunity). These RSOs set the framework for city and county development plans, which in turn set the policies for the local authorities as service delivery bodies. In particular RSO 1 is focussed on sustainable settlement patterns which involves the better management of sustainable and compact growth of Dublin, and the development of the Regional Growth Centres of Athlone, Dundalk and Drogheda; RSO 2 is concerned with compact growth and urban regeneration by promoting the regeneration of the Region's cities, towns and villages; RSO 3 is focussed on supporting sustainable rural development and strengthening rural networks, economies and communities; and RSO 4 Healthy Communities is concerned with protecting and enhancing the quality of the built and natural environment to support active lifestyles including walking and cycling.

The key considerations of compact growth and sustainable mobility are inextricably linked in RSOs of the RSES; they not only support further RSOs such as the transitioning to low carbon and clean energy

(RSO 9) and enhanced green infrastructure (RSO 10) by reducing carbon emissions and promoting green infrastructure as a result of reduced car dependency, they assist in achieving the vision of the RSES which includes ease of travel and overall wellbeing of the Region's citizens. Furthermore, compact growth aids in reinvigorating urban areas and coupled with sustainable transport results in the creation of attractive places where people can live, work and invest in.

Section 8.3 of the RSES outlines 'Guiding Principles for the Integration of Land Use and Transport' which mentions the need to manage space in town and village centres to deliver a high level of priority and permeability for walking, cycling and public transport modes to create accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe places to work, live, shop and engage in community life. The guiding principles also refer to supporting the '10-minute' settlement concept whereby a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycling timeframes from homes or accessible by high quality public transport to these services in larger settlements. Specifically, Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 8.1 of the RSES states that the integration of transport and land use planning in the Region shall be consistent with the guiding principles expressed in the Transport Strategy of the RSES.

Action 1b of the draft Implementation Plan is concerned with enhanced implementation mechanisms to support delivery and implementation of the National Strategic Outcomes of compact growth and sustainable mobility, including new institutional governance and funding mechanisms to support the phased alignment of large-scale urban development to major public transport investment. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is identified as the lead of this action, with the Department of Transport identified as the support stakeholder. The Regional Assembly would welcome the inclusion of the Regional Assemblies as support stakeholders in the delivery of this action. In this regard, one of the primary objectives of the RSES is to support the implementation of the NPF, in line with Section 28 (2)(a) of the draft Planning and Development Bill 2023 (and Section 23(1)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended). Furthermore, Section 29 (13) of the draft Bill states that an RSES and a Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan (MASP), which forms part of the RSES, shall include measures to secure its effective implementation and monitoring including priorities for transportation infrastructure (of scale), an order of priority for infrastructure provision, and potential sources of funding for infrastructure. The involvement of Regional Assemblies in this action will also support the recommendations outlined in the 2023 OECD Regional Development Paper, *'Toward Balanced Regional Attractiveness in Ireland: Enhancing the Delivery of the National Planning Framework'*. Table 5.1 of this paper recommends, in the area of investment, the implementation of a multi-level steering committee (to include Regional Assemblies) for NPF-related investments; the implementation of a multi-annual funding framework for local government, in addition to a multi-annual fund for MASP delivery coordinated by the Regional Assemblies; and in the area of housing (which is a factor of compact growth) to involve the Regional Assemblies in dialogues on housing development. The inclusion of the Regional Assemblies as a stakeholder in this action aligns with legislation and would be a progressive step towards the recommendations outlined in the OECD paper referenced above.

Action 33a is to establish a working group to identify an approach to the development of a national parking inventory to support potential parking related measures inter alia through the LA Demand

Management Schemes. Part of this work will include quantifying how much space is currently being dedicated to various modes of transport. The 'Guiding Principles for the Integration of Land Use and Transport' in the RSES includes the principles that: all non-residential development proposals should be subject to maximum parking standards; in locations where the highest intensity of development occurs, an approach that caps car parking on an area-wide basis should be applied; accessibility by car does need to be provided for, but in a manner, which complements the alternative available modes; local traffic management and the location/management of destination car parking should be carefully provided, and; cycle parking should be appropriately designed into the urban realm and new developments at an early stage to ensure that adequate cycle parking facilities are provided. Representation of the Regional Assemblies in the working group or in a support role could assist with the implementation of this action, both in terms of engagement with local authorities and other public bodies through our regional planning function and the potential to facilitate the hosting of relevant data on the Regional Development Monitor (See Section 2.8 below).

2.2 Optimal Use of Space

The draft Strategy highlights that in the ongoing evolution of land use and transport planning, the management and strategic allocation of public space has emerged as a critical component of any transport demand management strategy. The measures identified in the preparation of the draft Strategy include measures focused on reallocating space in favour of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport; improving liveability within urban areas to promote compact growth and regeneration; reallocating space in favour of sustainable logistics; and policy and regulations measures focused on managing and regulating space. In order to ensure the successful delivery of these measures, considerations were taken into account which include communication and engagement, tactical urbanism, equity and inclusion and planning legislation.

There are seven recommendations that emerged from this key area of focus. These include the development of local area Demand Management Schemes taking account of, and integrating them with, the roll-out of public transport service delivery plans; providing guidance, support, and adequate resourcing to local authorities with respect to these Schemes; updating national guidelines and standards in relation to demand management measures; reprioritising Active Travel Schemes; and establishing a fund to pilot demand management measures.

The draft Implementation Plan identifies thirteen actions as a result of these recommendations, which all relate to empowering and supporting local authorities in the development and delivery of local area Demand Management Schemes. The Regional Assemblies are identified as co-leads in one of the actions, Action 3a, and are not identified as stakeholder supports in any of these actions.

Action 3a identifies Regional Assemblies as co-lead (with the National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland and local authorities) and this relates to the development of the local area Demand Management Schemes, in line with guidance from the Department of Transport and NTA. It is advised that these Schemes could form part of Local Transport Plans (LTPs) and relevant Local Area Plans, in addition to being incorporated into the Area Based Transport Assessments

(ABTAs). LTPs assist in informing investment in local sustainable mobility. It is noted that Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 8.6 of the RSES states that in order to give local expression to the regional level Transport Strategy within the Region in conjunction with the NTA, Local Transport Plans (LTPs) will be prepared for selected settlements in the Region. In this respect, the Regional Assembly would support the inclusion of this action in the draft Implementation Plan, and welcomes the Regional Assemblies involvement in the action.

It is further noted by the Regional Assembly that Action 8c relates to the development of a training and development programme for local authorities in relation to development management approaches, based on the Pathfinder Accelerator model. The Department of Transport and the NTA are identified as co-leads, with no stakeholder supports identified. The Regional Assembly acknowledges that the Regional Assemblies led on the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Accelerator (SSMA), which was an action that emerged from the Pathfinder Programme of the National Sustainable Mobility Action Plan, and the Regional Assemblies continue to deliver on this pathfinder project for their respective regions. The SSMA consists of a training, education and capacity building workshop programme and online resource platform to support local authorities and stakeholders to design and implement sustainable mobility projects, and the project is due to conclude in December 2025. Action 8c relates to the further development of the programme in relation to development management approaches, which, it is acknowledged, is outside the scope of the remit of the Regional Assemblies who are not delivery bodies and are not involved in the development management planning process. However, Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 8.7 of the RSES is concerned with promoting the use of mobility management and travel plans to bring about behaviour change and more sustainable transport use and the SSMA, in addition to this action, aligns with this objective. In this respect the Regional Assembly welcomes this action and considers the leads as appropriate considerations.

2.3 Fiscal Measures

The draft Strategy highlights that fiscal measures in relation to transportation have a long-standing and continuing influence on travel behaviours across Ireland. In preparation of the draft Strategy, measures were discussed along three main axes: incentivising, penalising and revenue generating. The measures that were recommended as a result of these discussions include vehicle taxation; fuel pricing and road user charging; low emission zones and congestion charging; incentivising LEV and ZEV Up take (including Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure); vehicle insurance; encouraging sustainable land use; and workplace parking levies.

There are six recommendations that emerged from this key area of focus. These include development of a taxation approach regarding the ‘user and polluter pays’ principle which includes reviewing and developing legislation with respect to this principle; supplementing existing Government supports and reviewing existing incentives and parking legislation; and working with insurance companies to consider their contribution to the achievement of objectives in the Strategy.

The draft Implementation Plan identifies ten actions as a result of these recommendations. The Regional Assemblies are identified as co-leads (with the LGMA, New Era and the Department of Finance) on Action 9a in relation to exploring broader financing options for supporting demand management measures to maximise the benefits of multiple streams of financing. The Regional Assemblies welcome involvement in this action and will be able to harness their knowledge with respect to European funding in the area of climate action, that may be able to assist in this area. It is noted that the wording of Action 9 in Chapter 10 of the draft Strategy refers to supplementing existing supports from national Government. In this regard, the Regional Assembly recommends amending the narrative to include European funding. This reference to European funding options could also be included in the narrative of the output/outcome in Action 9a of the draft Implementation Plan. This amendment to the wording will ensure consistency with the narrative under Financing Options in Chapter 11 of the draft Strategy, which refers to European funding schemes as options that should be explored.

Actions 20a and 20b relate to a review and examination of options for implementing a parking levy and an examination of options for disincentivising workplace parking. The Regional Assembly notes the importance of workplace parking as a driver of demand. The Regional Assembly notes the implementation of aligned fiscal measures which disincentivise unsustainable travel behaviours.

2.4 Generators of Demand (Education, Sport, Public Sector and Tourism)

In the preparation of the draft Strategy, the reasons for the majority of car trips were analysed, and it was determined that, in Ireland, many trips every day are associated with public sector employment, education, tourism and sports. Measures were discussed in relation to this, and recommendations made in relation to encouraging sustainable transport through information and promotion; improving availability of sustainable transport through measures targeted at generators of demand; supporting behaviour change with targeted interventions to lower barriers to sustainable transport use; and sustainable transport for schools.

In support of this, the Transport Strategy (Section 8.2) of the RSES has also identified that trends within the Region indicate that there is an overreliance on the private car for travel to work and education, and this congestion impacts on the Region's commuters, public transport, and the efficient movement of goods and services to, from and within the Region.

There are eleven recommendations that emerged from this key area of focus. These include supporting remote working hubs and digitalisation; strengthening focus on transport related dimensions of corporate sustainability requirements; building on the actions of the Sustainable Mobility Action Plan 2022-2025; reducing transport demand created by Public Sector services; embedding demand management principles in Government funding programmes; and increasing and supporting sustainable mobility supports for educational institutions.

The draft Implementation Plan identifies twenty-four actions as a result of these recommendations. The Regional Assembly is not identified as a lead, co-lead or support stakeholder on any of these actions.

The Regional Assembly notes that Actions 16a and 17a are concerned with encouraging and supporting the use of remote working hubs, and enhancing digitalisation in the Public Sector as an exemplar. It is noted that the expansion of remote working hubs has increased significantly since 2020 and the onset of Covid-19, which the RSES predates, however, the RSES supports the development of remote working opportunities and co-working spaces through the Regional Enterprise Plans, as detailed in RPO 6.9 of the RSES. This acts as a measure to healthy placemaking, and investing in the creation of place which is identified in the Economic Strategy (Section 6.3) of the RSES as a key to realising regional potential. In this respect the Regional Assembly welcomes the identified recommendations and associated actions under this key area of focus, which will indirectly support the key principles of the RSES; Healthy Placemaking, Economic Opportunity and Climate Action.

2.5 Generators of Demand (Retail, Industry and Freight)

This key area of focus in the draft Strategy identified that Ireland's domestic and international freight sector is an integral part of the economy, and as the economy grows, demand for goods and the requirement for bulk movement continues to grow. In this respect, the draft Strategy identifies that most domestic freight movements in Ireland take place by car, whereas international freight movements include more significant multimodal elements.

Four recommendations emerged from this key area of focus. These involve developing policy for Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges including developing Freight Distribution Strategies for five cities (Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Galway) and improving opportunities for freight consolidation and the use of technology in this; and supporting additional energy efficiency measures.

The draft Implementation Plan identifies six actions as a result of these recommendations. The Regional Assemblies are identified as support stakeholders (including the NTA, local authorities, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the Department of Transport) for Action 11a, which is the development of strategies for sustainable freight distribution with key stakeholders for the GDA, and MASP cities. This action will involve consultation with lead organisations to agree the scope and approach to developing the strategies; the identification of any services required for procurement; the preparation of a work programme; and the completion and publication of strategies. Furthermore, Action 11b, with the same identified support stakeholders as Action 11a, is concerned with the development of regional level freight strategies in consultation with key stakeholders and consistent with the objectives of the RSES. The anticipated outcome is similar to Action 11a: to convene a working group and agree the terms of reference; prepare and agree the scope for regional and metropolitan level freight strategies; identify any services required for procurement; and complete and publish related strategies. Both of these actions will be led by the NTA and are due to be completed by Q4 2025.

The Regional Assembly welcomes the inclusion of the Regional Assemblies as support stakeholders, and Action 11b in particular aligns with RPO 8.5 of the RSES which is to support the preparation of a regional strategy for freight transport for the Region, in collaboration with the relevant transport agencies and the other Regional Assemblies.

However, the Regional Assembly would have concerns regarding the narrative in Chapter 10 of the draft Strategy, specifically with regard to the description of the outputs/outcomes of Action 11, which are detailed further in the draft Implementation Plan. In this respect, Chapter 10 states that the expected outcome is a *'requirement on Regional Assemblies to develop strategies for sustainable freight distribution in five cities – Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick, Waterford in line with the RSES'*. In addition, the 'Oversight and Responsibility' section of Chapter 1 of the draft Strategy states that *'each recommendation in this Strategy is assigned a lead owner who will be responsible for its delivery where appropriate (see associated Implementation Plan)*.' However, the draft Implementation Plan identifies the NTA as the lead on this action. As stated, RPO 8.5 of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region states the support of the preparation of a regional strategy for freight transport for the Region. In this respect, the Regional Assembly appreciates the inclusion of the Regional Assemblies as support stakeholders in this action, however, it recommends that the narrative in the description of the outputs/outcomes in Chapter 10 is amended to reflect that of the policy objective stated in the RSES, and to reflect the narrative of the draft Implementation Plan.

2.6 Captive Car Users

The draft Strategy identifies captive car users as *'individuals who rely on their personal vehicles due to limited viable alternatives, often driven by factors such as lack of suitable public transport options, physical disabilities, various journey types, or specific job requirements'*. The significance of captive car users in Ireland is supported by the NTA's National Travel Survey which cited that 21% of respondents noted 'no alternatives' as their reasons for car travel. The measures identified to ameliorate this were considered through the Avoid-Shift-Improve lens, as already defined under Section 2.0 of this submission. The consideration of this approach led to three recommendations which included raising consumer awareness on car buying and ownership; enhancing modelling tools to better understand the impacts of specific demand management measures; and commissioning research to measure and model the cumulative and relative impacts of the recommendations in the overall Strategy.

The draft Implementation Plan identifies six actions as a result of these recommendations. The Regional Assembly is not identified as a lead, co-lead or support stakeholder on any of these actions.

The Transport Strategy (Section 8.2) of the RSES recognises the need to overcome barriers to better mobility, whether they are political, economic, or physical such as poverty, disability, affordability or gender. It also identifies that the provision of good public transport, greenways and cycleways can enhance areas, including people's health and wellbeing. Furthermore, the RSES notes that the success of transport planning in meeting society's needs requires close integration of transport investment and land use planning, and this will assist in guiding future development within the Region. The

Regional Assembly welcomes a focus on this area in the draft Strategy, and the resultant recommendations and associated actions.

2.8 Evaluation and Review

Chapter 12 of the draft Strategy, Evaluation and Review, refers to the complexities of measuring the success of the objectives of the Strategy, and it highlights that this draft Strategy is one of two key policy documents involved in the effort to reduce vehicles kilometres travelled, which this Strategy is aiming to achieve, and by increasing the opportunities for shifting to more sustainable mobility journeys, which the Sustainable Mobility Policy (SMP) and its accompanying Action Plan is aiming to achieve. In this respect, the Strategy relies on the implementation of the SMP and similarly the SMP's objectives will be assisted by this Strategy. Furthermore, other conditions are required for the success of this Strategy including the increase of compact settlements, transport-led planning, and the appropriate location of educational institutions and health facilities. As a result, the draft Strategy is proposing a well-being approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy with a focus on indicators that relate to well-being and improved quality of life.

The chapter lists indicators (which include road traffic volumes, air quality, distance from public transport services etc.) and where the data can be obtained, which includes the NTA's National Household Travel Survey. The draft Strategy also refers to the CSO launched Transport Hub, which provides all transport related statistics in one location and will be a useful resource for tracking the performance in meeting the objectives of the Strategy. A further useful resource for the location of data and statistics relating to overall well-being is the Regional Development Monitor. The Regional Development Monitor is a publicly accessible data website that provides a national mapping and visualisation tool with a range of analytics dashboards, designed to enhance key societal trends in Ireland. It is a collaborative project between the three Regional Assemblies, the All-Ireland Research Observatory, and Ordnance Survey Ireland (via the GeoHive platform). Relevant dashboards to the evaluation of the Strategy will be 'Our People and Places' and 'Our Green and Sustainable Future' which include indicators relevant to compact growth and urban regeneration (percentage of housing completions within the built-up footprint); sustainable and planned urban and rural patterns (including commuting patterns to work and education and related mode of travel); healthy people and places (including health infrastructure); and low carbon future (data on electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles including location of charge points). The Regional Assembly would welcome the inclusion of this as a data source for locating statistics in Chapter 12 of the draft Strategy.

2.9 Other Considerations

The Regional Assembly notes that the outputs/outcomes narrative of Action 27a of the draft Implementation Plan refers to recommendation 28b, however, there does not appear to be a 28b listed in the actions/recommendations. This should be clarified in the final Implementation Plan.

Furthermore, it is noted that EMRA is incorrectly referred to as 'Eastern Midlands Regional Assembly' in the 'Acronyms' list in the draft Strategy. The correct term is the 'Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly.' This should be rectified in the final Strategy. In addition, the Regional Assemblies (RAs) are

not included in the list of acronyms, however, the RAs are referred to in the draft Implementation Plan. It is recommended to include this acronym in the final Strategy for clarity.

3.0 Recommendations

The Regional Assembly recommends the following in order for the draft National Transport Demand Strategy and its draft Implementation Plan to align with the policies and objectives of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region.

1. Action 1(b) of the draft Implementation Plan is concerned with developing enhanced implementation mechanisms to support delivery under NPF NSO 1 'Compact Growth' and NSO 4 'Sustainable Mobility'. The Regional Assemblies should be included as support stakeholders in the delivery of this action as one of the primary objectives of the RSES is to support the implementation of the NPF, in line with Section 28(2)(a) of the draft Planning and Development Bill 2023 and Section 23(1)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.
Reason: To align with planning legislation and the objectives of the RSES.
2. The wording of the output/outcome in relation to Action 11 in Chapter 10 of the draft Strategy should be amended to state 'Regional Assemblies to support the preparation of a regional strategy for freight distribution in collaboration with the relevant transport agencies.'
Reason: To ensure alignment with the objectives of the RSES.
3. The wording of Action 9 in Chapter 10 of the draft Strategy, and the wording of the output/outcome in relation to Action 9a of the draft Implementation Plan, should be amended to include European funding options.
Reason: To allow for all funding opportunities to be considered and to ensure consistency throughout the National Transport Demand Management Strategy.
4. The Regional Assemblies should be represented on the National Parking Data Inventory Working Group, or in a support role.
Reason: To assist with the implementation of Action 33a by facilitating engagement with local authorities and other public bodies through our regional planning function, and with regard to the potential to facilitate the hosting of relevant data on the Regional Development Monitor.
5. Chapter 12 of the Strategy should include a reference to the Regional Development Monitor as a data source for statistics for evaluating the objectives of the Strategy.
Reason: To assist in the evaluation and monitoring of the objectives of the National Transport Demand Management Strategy.

4.0 Conclusion

The Regional Assembly welcomes the opportunity to engage in the process of the preparation of the draft Transport Demand Strategy *'Moving Together: A Strategic Approach to the Improved Efficiency of the Transport System in Ireland'* and its accompanying Implementation Plan. We look forward to continuing engagement with the Department of Transport in the further development and implementation of the National Transport Demand Management Strategy, to support land use and transport planning integration for economic, social and environmental development throughout the Region, whilst transitioning to lower carbon transport emissions, greater levels of sustainable mobility and a higher quality of life for all in our society.

Regards,



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