

Progress on Smarter Travel

Highlights April – June 2009:

- **Green Schools Travel Programme expanded:** The Green Schools Travel Programme aims to encourage schoolchildren to take alternatives to the car to get to school. It has been expanded and is now reaching over 90,000 school children in 264 schools. By September 2009 this will extend to 140,000 school children in 450 schools. The Programme is proving very successful with a 22% reduction in the number of children travelling to school as car passengers, a 43% increase in walking, and a 6% increase in cycling.
- **Workplace travel plans in place:** Workplace travel plans aim to encourage employees to take alternatives to the car. The Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) has been running a pilot project with 25 organisations, with a total of 45,000 employees taking part. The results so far are encouraging with a 16% reduction in car use. A plan to extend the programme nationwide to 100 companies with 250,000 employees has been approved by the Minister for Transport.
- **Personalised travel plan demonstration project:** The Minister has also approved a demonstration Personalised Travel Plan at Adamstown which is being carried out through the DTO. This targets residential areas to encourage people to take alternatives to the car in their commutes.
- **National Cycle Policy Framework published:** Ireland's first National Cycle Policy Framework was published in April 2009. This outlines the necessary actions to deliver 10% mode share for cycling in Ireland by 2020. The Government's vision behind the policy is "to create a culture of cycling in Ireland".
- **National Bike Week:** Ireland's first National Bike Week ran from 14th-21st June. Thousands of people took part in events across the country, including a family fun day in the Phoenix Park, a cycling treasure hunt in Galway, a fathers' day cycle in Clare, and a youth fun cycle in Westmeath. All the events, and photographs can be seen on www.bikeweek.ie, and planning for 2010 event is already underway.
- **National Cycle Network:** A workshop on the development of a National Cycle Network was held in the Department of Transport in April. Departments and agencies, as well as independent experts in the area, met and discussed how best to develop a cycle network of national extent that will attract the maximum numbers of users. The Minister for Transport approved the commissioning of a mapping study by the NRA and the establishment of an advisory forum through the National Trails Office.
- **Working group on walking:** Relevant government departments have been invited to nominate representatives to a working group on walking.

This group will work towards developing policies that will promote walking for both leisure and transport, and that will complement the National Cycle Policy Framework. The group will also address how to promote the use of State lands for the development of walking and cycling trails.

Focus on Walking Initiatives:

There is now a comprehensive range of recreational walks throughout the country to suit all ages and fitness levels, from long distance walks on Ireland's network of [National Waymarked Ways](#), to shorter looped walks and forestry walks and even [Slí Na Sláinte](#) strolls. With regard to forestry walks, Coillte manages many kilometres of walking and cycle trails which are outlined on their [Recreation Website](#). Fáilte Ireland, with support from the Dept of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCRAGA) has developed over [100 Looped Walks](#) throughout the country. According to Fáilte Ireland, over half a million (517,000) overseas visitors went hiking/cross-country walking in 2008.

There are also developments in terms of the use of dis-used and abandoned rail lines for walking and cycling, in particular the Tralee to Fenit and Newport to Mulranny lines. The former Galway to Clifden line is being examined for possible use as a walkway. DCRAGA continues to support the expansion of the Great Southern Trail from Ardagh to Abbeyfeale.

A big event in terms of promoting walking in Ireland is the [National Trails Day](#). This celebrates and publicises Ireland's wonderful variety of trails and walks and is to be held this year on Sunday, 4th October.

Ireland also has a National Countryside Recreation Strategy, the implementation of which is overseen by Comhairle na Tuaithe (The Countryside Council), supported by DCRGA. This National Countryside Recreation Strategy has resulted in the launch by DCRGA of the [Walks Scheme](#), under which access to the walkway is given freely, and landowners are paid to carry out the necessary maintenance works along the trail.

- **MOU on electric vehicles:** The Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and the ESB announced in April that they have each signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Renault-Nissan alliance to promote the introduction of electric vehicles in Ireland. This will ensure that these vehicles are offered for sale here as soon as they are available, while also ensuring that Irish utilities and Government are fully apprised of the latest developments in electric vehicle technology.
- **Electric vehicle pilot scheme:** Sustainable Energy Ireland is conducting a €500,000 pilot scheme to assess the suitability of Ireland for electric vehicles and to demonstrate and test various infrastructural systems.

- **Consultation on Legislation to Transpose the Aviation Directive:** The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government invited comments from interested parties on legislation transposing the Aviation Directive in June.(2008/101/EC).The Aviation Directive extends the Emissions Trading Scheme to aviation activities and will lead to a reduction of CO2 emissions attributable to aviation across the EU.

- **Smarter Travel demonstration projects:** The Department of Transport is currently examining 34 demonstration projects to support *Smarter Travel*. Work has commenced on the following:
 - Bus marketing plan for Galway City
 - Cycleway at Fisheries Field, Galway
 - Eyeries cycle and walkway, Co Cork

- **Smarter Travel Demonstration Fund set up:** A Smarter Travel Demonstration Fund was established, and the call for first proposals advertised in June. Closing date for applications is September 9th. Further details are available on www.smartertravel.ie.

- **European Mobility Week:** The Minister for Transport approved funding for 10 schemes throughout the country to support European Mobility Week in September 2009. The projects permanently re-allocate road space to pedestrians and cyclists.