

## **Progress on Smarter Travel**

### **Highlights July – September 2009:**

- **Smarter Travel Areas Competition:** The Smarter Travel Areas Competition was launched in July 2009. It is a €50 million investment in sustainable travel over five years and will support the delivery of an integrated suite of measures such that travel and mobility patterns within the successful area(s) are transformed to meet the vision of Smarter Travel by 2013. Smarter Travel area bids are to be co-ordinated by the relevant Local Authorities, and further details can be found at <http://www.smartertravel.ie/smarter-travel-areas>.
  
- **Smarter Travel Project Fund:** The closing date for applications to this project fund was September 9<sup>th</sup>. Over 120 applications were received, from a wide range of areas, including cycling infrastructure, personalised travel planning and electric vehicle projects. Assessment of these applications is under way.
  
- **Exemplary infrastructural projects approved:**
  - €1.2 million will be made available for a new cycling and walking network in Carrigaline Co Cork. It will result in a high quality network of 7.4km linking residential areas to schools, local GAA pitches and an existing industrial estate.
  - €932,000 will be made available for a 4.8km off road cycling and walking route linking Passage West to Rochestown in Cork. It will provide a direct link between Passage West and the City, and will encourage more people to leave their cars at home, and opt to walk or cycle instead.
  - €150,000 will be made available for an off-road cycle track in Castletroy, Co. Limerick. The project will serve both commuters (by improving access to the University of Limerick and Plassey Park) and recreational cyclists (as it completes an existing loop of cycle tracks).
  - €1.6m will be made available to Mayo County Council to develop a 17.5km off-road cycle and walking route between Newport and Mulranny in Co. Mayo, along an abandoned rail line. Financial support for this project is also being made available by the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Fáilte Ireland.
  - Up to €10 million will be made available to Dublin City Council in the period 2009 / 2010 towards the provision of a premium, largely off-road, continuous cycle route to link Portobello on the southside and Fairview Park on the northside. This continuous, largely off-road,

project, including four new canal crossings, which has been developed in outline by Dublin City Council, envisages –

- A route via the Grand Canal and Forbes Street from Rathmines Road Lower to the new Samuel Beckett Bridge at City Quay
  - Having crossed the Samuel Beckett bridge, a route via the Royal Canal and West Road to connect with the existing cycle path in Fairview Park. This segment of the route will form part of the northside portion of the Sutton to Sandycove route.
  - When completed, this route will enable cyclists, of all levels of experience, to travel in comfort from the Bull Wall on the northside, through high employment areas in the Financial Services Centre and in the South Inner City, to Portobello. Not only will the route serve commuters and recreational cyclists alike, it will also improve conditions for pedestrians at 10 busy road junctions.
- Up to €2.14 million will be made available to South Dublin County Council over the period 2009 / 2010 to provide a direct link from residential development in the Adamstown area, via parkland and a new canal crossing, to the new cycle path (under construction) that runs from the 12<sup>th</sup> Lock on the Grand Canal to Inchicore.

- **European Mobility Week:**

- European Mobility Week ran from 16<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September. The theme for the 2009 campaign was “Improving City Climates”. In support of European Mobility Week the Department of Transport provided funding to 9 local authorities for projects which promoted and supported sustainable modes of travel and transport. The projects undertaken ranged from the installation of periodic speed limit signs protecting the needs of vulnerable road users, to the creation of a comprehensive walking trail for the city of Cork. Each LA will input details of their project on the [www.mobilityweek.eu](http://www.mobilityweek.eu) website.
- The Department also joined forces with the four public transport providers - Irish Rail, Bus Átha Cliath, LUAS and Bus Éireann in an advertising campaign to promote the use of public transport and the initiatives being undertaken by each transport provider during Mobility Week.

- **Establishment of a Smarter Travel Local Authority Network:**

- The Smarter Travel Policy identifies the key role that Local Authorities will have in the delivery of a sustainable transport system. Many of the 49 actions in the policy require implementation at local level - improved spatial planning; retrofitting of existing neighbourhoods and commercial areas; providing safe routes to educational establishments just to mention a few. Local Authorities will also be required to develop Local Travel Plans.
- To facilitate Local Authorities in carrying out this role a Smarter Travel Local Authority Network has been established to which each City and County Manager has nominated a representative. The purpose of the Local Authority Network is to provide for structured liaison between central and local government to ensure that the Government's vision is delivered consistently and in accordance with best international practice at local level in Ireland.
- The first meeting of the LA Network was held on July 14<sup>th</sup> 2009, and it is planned that the Network will meet three to five times per year.

In fostering co-ordination on all aspects of the Government actions in the new policies the Network will, among other things, develop training programmes to deepen delivery of *Smarter Travel* at local level and act as a networking forum to support excellence in the delivery of the new agenda.

- **Development of a National Cycle Network Route Design and Delivery Plan:**

- The development of a National Cycle Network, mainly off road, around and linking urban centres is a specific objective of Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework. The policy framework identifies the need to deliver quality off road cycle routes on a nationwide basis so as to encourage cycling for transport, tourism and leisure, and to ensure the development of a culture of cycling in Ireland.
- An overarching route design and delivery plan is an essential step in ensuring such a National Cycle Network can be delivered.
- The National Roads Authority, at the request of the Department of Transport, have agreed to commence work on a project that will deliver a route design and delivery plan for an interurban National Cycle Network.
- This project will be supported by a steering group, to be chaired by the National Trails Advisory Committee. The steering group will bring together all the stakeholders in the project and ensure that the project supports the aims of the Smarter Travel, including promoting sustainable transport modes, encouraging increased leisure activity, boosting tourism and supporting economic growth. The steering group will also ensure that existing expertise on the delivery of off-road routes is available for this project.

- **Bike Week 2010:** Initial planning for Bike Week 2010 commenced with the first meeting of the Bike Week Team (a cross-community group including cycling campaigners, industry, An Taisce, local authorities, the health sector, Cycling Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, private individuals, the Office of Public Works, the Dublin Transportation Office, the Road Safety Authority, and the Department of Transport) held on 17 September. Details of the programme for Bike Week 2010 will emerge over the coming months.
- **Houses of the Oireachtas: Leinster Lawn:** Leinster Lawn has now been reinstated with a consequent reduction in car parking spaces
- **Office of Public Works:** OPW Historic Properties is expanding the use of lands for walking and cycling at historic properties. One example, is the network of off-road cycle tracks in the Phoenix Park