

## Progress on Smarter Travel

### Highlights October – December 2009:

- **2009 saw the Government invest in a wide range of infrastructural projects to encourage more sustainable travel and transport behaviour.**
  - Two off road cycling routes, from Carrigaline to Crosshaven, and from Passage West to Rochestown, were opened in County Cork in December 2009. The Carrigaline to Crosshaven route is 5km in length and now provides an alternative transport route for those commuting between Carrigaline and Crosshaven. The Passage West to Rochestown route is 4.8km in length and means a high quality walk and cycle way now connects Passage West to the employment zones of Mahon and Togher, with a cycle link on to the city. Both routes also provide attractive recreational routes for walking and cycling. The two routes, costing €1.6 million in total, were funded by the Department of Transport, in line with the Smarter Travel policy.
  - A €430,000 project to deliver safe walking and cycling routes in the County Cork town of Eyeries was also completed in 2009. Walking and cycling routes now link the school and GAA club to the town centre. Work on the Carrigaline Cycle Network has also progressed well with the 7.8km of cycle route expected to be completed by mid 2010.
  - A 17.5km off-road cycle route between Newport and Mulranny, costing €1.6m to develop, is also nearing completion. This will provide a world-class recreational cycle route. A further project in Mayo involves the re-development of a disused rail line path in Westport Town to provide 3.5km of walking and cycling route. The route will connect residential areas to schools and businesses in the town. This project will continue in 2010 in terms of providing access points and cycle parking, and also through continued support measures to promote and encourage cycling and walking in the area.
  - An off-road cycle track has been provided in Castletroy, Co. Limerick. The 1.6km path, delivered at a cost of €185,000, serves commuters (by improving access to the University of Limerick and Plassey Park) and recreational cyclists (as it completes an existing loop of cycle tracks).
  - Mention that the premium Dublin Cycle Route has cleared the public consultation phase?
- **Green Schools Travel Module:** 2009 saw the continued expansion of the Green Schools Travel Module. In September 2009 an additional 168

schools joined the programme. It is planned that 144,000 pupils in 482 schools will be reached by the end of the school year in June 2010. The most recent results indicate that, over the past school year, participating schools experienced a 22% reduction in private car use. This significant shift represents a reduction of almost 20,000 car related trips to school per day, or nearly 100,000 trips per week. This shift away from the car means a shift towards healthier active travel, with walking and cycling increasing by 43% and 28% respectively in the participating schools.

- **Work Place Travel Plans:** 2009 also saw the introduction of a national work place travel plan programme supported by the Department of Transport. By December 2009 60,000 staff in 30 organisations were being targeted, with this figure expected to increase to 70,000 staff in 50 organisations by mid 2010. 2009 also saw 1,000 members participating in a car-sharing programme at 10 workplace sites, with the plans for this to increase to 3,000 users at 20 sites by mid 2010.
- **Smarter Travel Areas Competition:** This scheme seeks to 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.

A total of 39 applications were received from Local Authorities. 11 applications have been shortlisted for Phase 2 of the competition, where they will compete for funding totalling €50m over five years. The shortlisted schemes are in:

- Cork City
- Drimnagh, Dublin City
- Dundalk
- Dungarvan
- Galway Metropolitan Area
- Kilkenny City
- Limerick City and County – Castletroy
- Loughrea
- Navan
- Sandyford and environs
- Westport

The shortlisted applicants will now draw up more detailed proposal of how they plan to implement an integrate suite of sustainable transport measures in the selected areas. Stage 2 bids will be submitted by the end of May 2010. The successful Smarter Travel Areas will be announced in

the summer, with funding beginning in the second half of 2010 for a five-year period.

- **Smarter Travel Project Fund:** 35 projects have been shortlisted for funding through the Smarter Travel Project Fund. Funding of €3 million will be made available in 2010. A final decision on the projects to be supported will be made in early 2010, and the list of successful projects will be published on the Smarter Travel website. The types of projects shortlisted include:
  - Delivery of cycling and walking infrastructure
  - Supporting cycling and walking through soft support measures
  - Implementation of travel plans
  - Implementation of safe routes to schools
  - Eco-driving initiative
  - Electric vehicles trial project.
  
- **National Household Travel Survey:** The Smarter Travel Policy outlines the need for a National Transport Survey to be in place to support the monitoring of the policy implementation. The Central Statistics Office, with financial support from the Department of Transport, commenced a National Household Transport Survey in Quarter 4 of 2009. This survey will provide baseline indicators for monitoring the Smarter Travel policy in future years, and will facilitate monitoring travel and transport behaviour to ensure that it is in line with the necessary shifts in behaviour needed to achieve a sustainable transport future.
  
- **E-working:** In Smarter Travel, the Government commits to enhancing opportunities for e-working to reduce the need for travel. The Minister for Transport set up an interdepartmental working group to draft an action plan to deliver on this commitment. Its members are:
  - Department of Transport
  - Department of Finance
  - Department of Enterprise and Employment
  - Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources
  - Office of Public Works
  
- **National Walking Policy:** The Minister for Transport also set up an interdepartmental working group to draft a national walking policy in response to the commitment in Smarter Travel to develop walking as a serious mode of travel for shorter distances. This group comprises:

- Department of Transport
  - Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
  - Department of Health and Children
  - Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism
  - Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- **National Eco-driving Initiative:** This is a further commitment in Smarter Travel and the Minister set up an interagency group to work on this, comprising the Department of Transport, the Road Safety Authority and Sustainable Energy Ireland.
  - **North/South pilot car-sharing scheme:** Smarter Travel commits to promoting car-sharing and, specifically commits to supporting a pilot project. The document also sets out the Government's intention to work with counterparts in Northern Ireland to develop a website applicable to the whole island.

Carshare North West is a cross-border demonstration project on sustainable transport, which arose out of discussions at the North South Ministerial Council Transport Sectoral Sub-Group. A key objective of the project is to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the road in the North West area. The project is a two-year pilot, which establishes an internet-based scheme [www.carsharenw.com](http://www.carsharenw.com) to facilitate contact between people in the North West making a similar journey, allowing them to share vehicles. The scheme was officially launched on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November in Derry City.

The benefits of car sharing include:

- Reduction in the number of single-occupancy cars;
- Reduction in traffic congestion at peak periods;
- Reduction in demands for car parking spaces;
- Environmental benefits through reduction in number of cars and reduced congestion;
- Reduction in travel costs for car sharers;
- Reduction in the need for a private car;and
- Helps provide a solution to transport problems in rural areas.

- **National Cycling Certificate for School Children:** The Minister for Transport has established a Working Group to prepare a report for Government on how primary school children can be formally accredited in safe cycling. The Minister sees the education of young people as key to delivering the Government's vision of having a cycling culture in Ireland by 2020. The Group is based on the Green Schools Advisory Committee, augmented by local authority cycle trainers and will comprise of the following organisations:
  - The Department of Education and Science
  - The Road Safety Authority
  - The Department of Transport
  - The DTO
  - An Taisce
  - The INTO
  - Representatives from Local Authorities with experience in cycle training programmes

The group held two meetings in 2009, where they discussed the issues and reviewed existing schemes. The group will meet again in January and will progress the development of a Memo to Government in 2010.

- **Rural Transport Programme:** The programme continues to expand with a record 1.5 million trips generated in 2009. Notwithstanding recommendations in the McCarthy Report the Government decided to retain funding for the Programme in 2010
- **Cycle Design Guidelines:** The National Cycle Policy Framework commits to delivering new guidelines for cycle design in keeping with the Government's new approach to cycling. Draft guidelines were made available for public consultation in December 2009 and responses are due in January 2010.
- **Walks and Trails** By end 2009, the work undertaken by DCRGA that is supported by Comhairle na Tuaithe (the Countryside Council) in implementing the National Countryside Recreation Strategy has resulted in significant additional recreational walks being developed. This work has been done in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, the National Trails Office, Coillte, Local Development (LEADER) Companies and representatives of farmers and walkers/recreation groups. There are now 28 Walks/Trails throughout the country being funded under DCRGA's Walks Scheme. In addition Fáilte Ireland have developed 110 trailheads incorporating 165

associated Looped Walks, while Coillte have 100 recreation sites and 149 walking trails on their lands, many of them looped walks developed in association with Fáilte Ireland.

- **Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets:** A project team has been established comprising of representatives from a number of local authorities with a range of expertise to produce an urban design manual to support and encourage more sustainable travel patterns in urban areas. A steering committee and a technical advisory group have also been established to guide the overall direction and technical content of the project. The project team commenced work in December 2009.
  
- **National Transport Authority:** The NTA was established on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009. The Principal functions of the NTA tie in with the objectives of the Smarter Travel agenda, it will
  - undertake strategic planning of transport
  - promote the development of an integrated, accessible public transport network
  - regulate public transport fares
  - license public bus passenger services that are not subject to a public transport services contract
  - develop and maintain a regulatory framework for the control and operation of taxis and their drivers
  - promote increased recourse to cycling and walking as a means of transport
  - secure the:
    - provision of public passenger transport services
    - provision of public transport infrastructure
    - provision of integrated ticketing and information systems for public transport
    - effective management of traffic
    - effective management of transport demand
    - development and implementation of a single public transport brand
    - collection of statistical data and information on transport
    - conduct of research into transport

**College Green Bus-Gate:** Dublin City Council introduced the College Green Bus-Gate in July 2009. This measure allowed only Public Transport (Buses and Taxis) vehicles and bicycles to travel through the College Green area at peak travel times. The bus-gate was suspended in the evening peak from November 18<sup>th</sup> to January 15<sup>th</sup> inclusive. It will re-open in the evening peak from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January.

Travel times for buses through the College Green Corridor have greatly improved with time savings of between 3 and 14 minutes per bus. According to Dublin City Council there has been a 25-30% increase in cycling numbers on College Green and a 62% increase in bicycle traffic on O'Connell Street through the combined operation of the Bus Gate and Dublin Bikes scheme. It has also resulted in an improved environment for pedestrians. A further review of the operation of the bus-gate will take place in May 2010.

**AVLS:** In December 2009 Dublin Bus completed the installation of Automatic Vehicle Location System at its Summerhill Depot on its Public Service Obligation funded buses. This system will allow for more efficient use of the Bus fleet and will also provide the platform for the deployment of real time passenger information (*RTPI*) and is a necessary precursor to RTPI since, once AVLS is installed, RTPI will be available to passengers via mobile phone and the internet. Display signs at Bus-stops will be installed late in 2010.

Following testing of the operation of the system at the Summerhill depot the system will be rolled out across all the Dublin Bus depots and will be completed in 2010. As part of this project Dublin Bus is also installing Traffic Light Priority devices onto their buses that will communicate through Dublin City Council's SCART system with traffic lights in the GDA and should lead to an improvement in journey times.

**Cycle Liaison Group:** The first meeting of this Group took place in December. The purpose of the Group is to ensure that appropriate provision is made for cycling facilities at and near to new public transport infrastructure (particularly in relation to the DART Underground and Metro North stations). Representatives of Iarnród Éireann, the RPA, Dublin and Fingal County Councils and Department of Transport are on the group.

**Integrated Ticketing:** In December 500 Iánróid Éireann interim smart cards were issued to annual Tax saver ticket holders. This roll-out will continue in 2010.

**Get Ireland Active Initiative:** A Joint Seminar was organised by the Department of Transport, the HSE and the Irish Sports Council “Working Together to Get Ireland Active” in December, 2009. (See [www.getirelandactive.ie](http://www.getirelandactive.ie))

**Carbon Budget 2010:** The Government published details of the Framework for the Climate Change Bill 2010 as a cornerstone of the third carbon budget, which was announced by Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, John Gormley in the Dáil in December.

The Minister said the legislation will result in a new statutory requirement to reduce emissions by 80 per cent by 2050, compared to 1990 levels. It will also set up a new climate change office within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and a new expert climate change committee with a powerful advisory role.

The key policies that will be enshrined in the legislation are that the 3 per cent annual reduction in emissions will continue until 2020 and an 80 per cent reduction on 1990 emissions will be the target for 2050.

The new legislation will also put the climate change strategy on a statutory footing, as will the annual carbon budget.

The Minister also described the carbon levy announced by Minister for Finance Brian Lenihan as the second cornerstone of the carbon budget. He said it had the potential to reduce emissions by up to 250,000 tonnes each year.