Planning for the Future of Transport

Time for Change

Department for
Infrastructure

An Roinn
Bonneagair

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MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

Our new Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework reflects how highly people value their health and wellbeing, and that to facilitate this, government must strive for a positive transformation. The Department for Infrastructure has a huge role to play in enabling this transformation. In particular it can help us live and work sustainably, develop a regionally balanced green economy, and make Northern Ireland a place in which people want to live, work and visit.

Since becoming Infrastructure Minister, my eyes have been opened to the way in which our society is being left behind by the global change happening around travel. Active travel needs to become a pillar of change within towns and cities in an effort to cut emissions, to improve health and wellbeing, and to better connect families and communities.

That is why I am calling time on the slowness of change here and pledging that I am determined to turn the curve.

For some time my Department's policies have promoted greener, more sustainable travel choices but, in the main, they have not delivered in practice. So while the policies are not being changed, I recognise that my Department must work in a different way in order to assist in putting the right schemes in the right place. This must be done at pace, working across government, and supporting the draft Programme for Government Outcomes.

I am therefore setting out the changes that we need to make while working with councils in planning our cities, towns and countryside for the next 10 to 15 years, and in assisting appropriate development on a day to day basis. We also have to grasp opportunities to increase the allocation of road space to pedestrians, cyclists and buses on our urban streets; recognising the role that these streets have as community places; and their ability to help us achieve our new outcomes.

I recognise that management, maintenance and development of our transport networks is essential, and that delivering on the promises of our flagship schemes – the projects in New Decade, New Approach, and those within the City and Growth Deals – is a priority for this Department and the Executive. But I am determined that we must invest more to change the course, and deliver the changes in behaviour that are needed to improve people's health and happiness.

I am confident that great success is possible when we get it right.

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

1.1. This document, *Planning for the Future of Transport – Time for Change* outlines how the Department's priorities for the future of transport here can be supported by the improved planning, management and development of the transport networks over the next 10 to 15 years. The focus is on the changes we need to make, working across government, with transport contributing to societal and environmental objectives as well as economic ones.

1.2. This plan is a reprioritisation of our aims and actions to best meet the needs of new and emerging challenges. There is no change to existing policy; rather this document acts as a guide to illustrate how the existing policies can support sustainable transport solutions when developing transport plans for local areas, and in the prioritisation of investment across the regional network.

1.3. It is hoped that *Planning for the Future of Transport – Time for Change* will provide examples of the "right scheme in the right place", and will provide greater understanding and clarity regarding the critical roles of the different transport modes in promoting the Green Recovery and the recovery of our economy, as well as improving community place-making.

1.4. It is recognised that sustainable and active travel projects will require funding, and this needs to be seen in the context of the existing financial pressures on day to day asset maintenance activities and on current Executive commitments. These include transport schemes, Flagship projects and infrastructure commitments set out in New Decade New Approach, along with current City and Growth Deals being progressed by the councils and their partners.

Structure

1.5. *Planning for the Future of Transport – Time for Change* is structured as follows:

- Section 2 – Where we are

- Section 3 - Where we want to get to

- Section 4 - How we will get there

- Section 5 - Transport Plans

- Section 6 – Examples of Transport Measures

- Section 7 – What Happens Next

2. WHERE WE ARE

Context

2.1. Transport networks are an essential component of our daily lives; they enable goods to get to market enabling us to fill the shelves in our shops, let us travel to work, and allow us to connect with our friends and family. Transport has wide impacts on social well-being and equality, the level and distribution of growth in the economy, and the maintenance and improvement of the environment, both natural and built. While a lot of transport expenditure is spent on the construction and maintenance of physical infrastructure, ongoing support for public transport, active travel and the management of the transport network is also substantial. Indeed how the transport network is maintained, used and managed is key to whether it delivers for people here.

Things we do well

2.2. People who live in Northern Ireland enjoy a high level of personal wellbeing compared to GB, with rural residents reporting significantly better results than urban residents. People living in Mid Ulster report the highest levels of happiness and life satisfaction. Our attractive rural countryside and traditional market towns, linked by a network of roads and public transport contribute to this result. The main cities of Belfast and Derry also have strengths as centres of employment and key services supported by regional roads, rail links and local bus services.

2.3. Northern Ireland is a relatively small region but a very accessible one. From its geographic centre, most places can be reached within 60 minutes and almost all corners within 90 minutes travel time by car.

2.4. As would be expected, there are variations in the quality of transport provision between urban and rural areas arising from the efficiencies which result from population density. However, in general the transport network is fitted to the unique rural characteristics of our settlement patterns. We have for example:

- a total public road length[1] of 13.6 miles per 1000 persons compared to 3.4 miles in England, 6.7 miles in Wales, 6.8 in Scotland and 12.7 miles in Ireland;

- bus and rail services that operate more than 40 million miles each year ensuring direct access to public transport to more than 83% of the population with 68% within 30 minutes travel time of a large town or city;

- a railway network with 54 stations and halts that seeks to maximise its passenger catchment through integrated bus services and car parking provision; and

- eight Rural Community Transport Partnerships to support the delivery of public transport to people who live in a rural area and have difficulty accessing everyday services.

2.5. In Belfast and Derry we have urban public transport operations that compare with GB and Ireland. We have:

- rail services operated by modern rolling stock with high levels of reliability and passenger satisfaction and with passenger numbers that have increased year on year to 2018/19;

- the Belfast Glider bus rapid transit system which has been successful in boosting bus passengers in the corridor by over 70% with approximately 8% of new users switching from private car; and

- modern buses operating at high frequencies on the main arterial roads making the cities accessible for workers, shoppers and visitors from early in the morning to late evening.

Things we could do better

2.6. As our road network is extensive, maintenance costs are considerable (£138 million in 2019-20) and Belfast in particular can be very congested at peak periods. The high availability of, and preference for, private cars has led to

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[1] As of 2019 in the UK and 2018 in Ireland. IE source: https://igees.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Transport-Trends-2020.pdf

progressive reductions in rural bus services, town centre streets dominated by vehicles, and air quality problems in urban centres.

2.7. Moreover, the design and operation of our urban roads and streets often works against their essential 'place' function (i.e. a place to spend time and socialise) and makes them unattractive to pedestrians and cyclists. This has had the effect of further locking in habitual car use for even short journeys, and despite more recent efforts to improve facilities for walking and cycling there has been very limited switching from private car which impacts on personal health. Our town centres have also declined in terms of economic vitality and of social importance as a community meeting place, in preference to large retail centres often developed in out of town locations.

2.8. Our rail network is limited in size and coverage. This is especially the case in the west, where lower population densities and improved roads and bus services led to the closure of rail lines many years ago. However, with increased focus on sustainable transport there is now renewed interest in their re-opening as part of a more integrated multi-modal transport system. We need to seize the opportunities of rail and the benefits it can deliver for communities across our island.
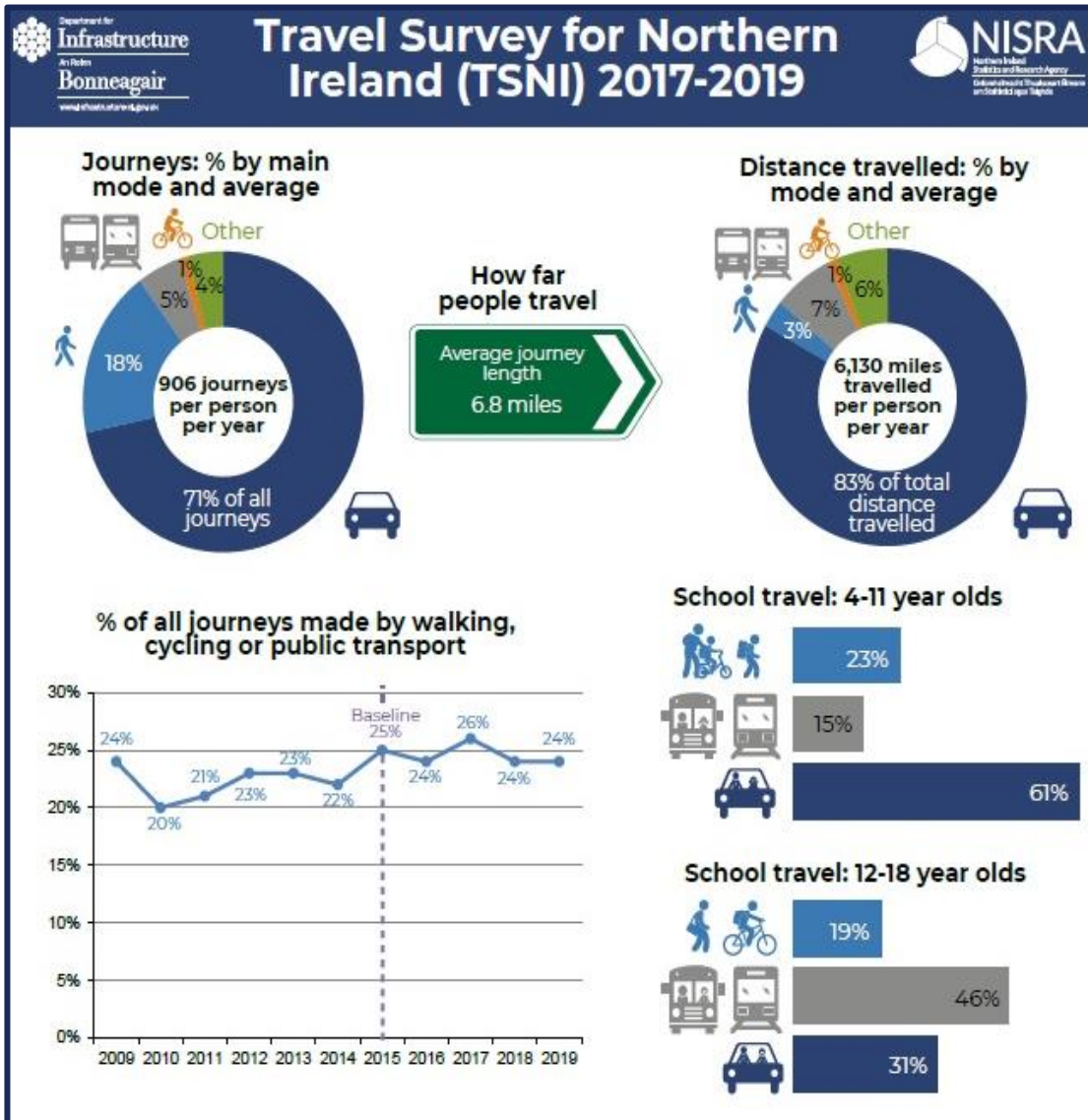
2.9. Our current performance is not good on a number of indicators, for example:

- a report in 2019 by the Northern Ireland Audit Office identified that 'a growing maintenance backlog of £1.2 billion exists as a result of long-term underfunding'. This same issue was highlighted in the Barton Report (2018) which concluded that £143m should be spent annually on the road network in Northern Ireland to ensure it is fit for purpose. Over the last 5 years the average structural maintenance spend has averaged around £94m;

- Belfast is reported by INRIX[2] as being a highly congested city compared with cities in GB and is only behind London in terms of the difference in travel times between peak and free-flow times of the day;

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[2] INRIX provides averaged car speeds for five different times of day (am peak, off peak, pm peak, peak and night-time) across the road network which are derived from billions of INRIX GPS sample points from vehicles on the move in the United Kingdom.

- across the North, 17 Air Quality Management Areas have been declared as a result of air pollutant emissions from road traffic. These are in the main caused by Nitrogen Dioxide from vehicle exhausts and occur in urban areas in 9 of the 11 councils;

- carbon dioxide emissions from transport increased in 2016 for a third consecutive year. Transport emissions in 2016 were 29% higher than in 1990, and represented 22% of all emissions in Northern Ireland in 2016; and

- the vast majority of journeys continue to be made by private car (71%) whilst overall walking, cycling and public transport use has barely changed despite sustained efforts in recent years. Less than one quarter (23%) of children between the age of 4 and 11 walk or cycle to primary school, whilst almost two thirds (61%) travel by car, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2017-2019

Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) 2017-2019

Journeys: % by main mode and average

Other
1%
4%
5%
18%
906 journeys per person per year
71% of all journeys

How far people travel

Average journey length
6.8 miles

Distance travelled: % by mode and average

Other
1%
6%
7%
3%
6,130 miles travelled per person per year
83% of total distance travelled

% of all journeys made by walking, cycling or public transport

30%
24%
Baseline 25%
26%
24%
25%
21%
23%
23%
24%
24%
20%
22%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019

School travel: 4-11 year olds

23%
15%
61%

School travel: 12-18 year olds

19%
46%
31%

Travelling towards a better future

3.1. Transport has an important role to play in improving our daily lives in the short and medium term future; in the longer term spatial planning also has a primary role. The Executive's agreed approach to its Programme for Government confirms support for improving wellbeing outcomes and addressing long-standing social, environmental and economic issues. The COVID emergency has thrown greater emphasis in the short term on personal health and community well-being and on support for businesses and family incomes.

3.2. The Draft Outcomes Framework, shown in Figure 2, identifies nine key societal outcomes – to which transport is central to three of these:

- we live and work sustainably – protecting the environment;

- our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon-neutral; and

- people want to live, work and visit here.

3.3. Transport also makes significant contributions to at least three others:

- our children and young people have the best start in life;

- we all enjoy long, healthy, active lives; and

- we have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives.

Figure 2 - Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework

3.4. The Executive intends that the Outcomes Framework will be its way of demonstrating progress towards the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs).

3.5. As we recover from COVID we must take the opportunity to establish new, better and healthier ways of conducting business and living our daily lives. Working from home and flexible working hours is likely to become established normal practice for large groups of workers and people will be keen to spend more time with family/friends and in the outdoors. This will put a premium on good quality places within convenient travel distances to socialise and to take exercise and recreation; places whose design make them easy to use by all.

3.6. We also have a responsibility to consider the impacts of climate change for the benefit of future generations. We will take a Green Growth approach to reduce our

carbon emissions from transport and protect our environment, whilst creating a living and working landscape that contributes to sustainable economic growth.

3.7. Therefore we need transport to contribute across the spectrum of environmental, social and economic improvements, for example, so that:
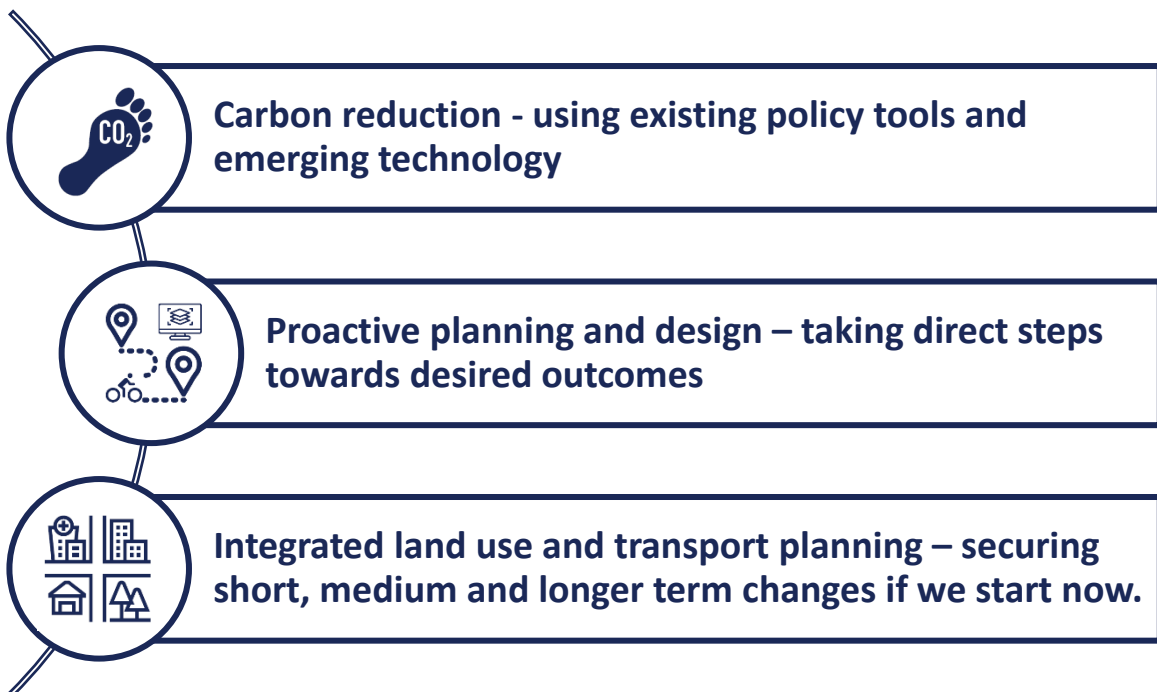
- businesses can be assured of fast and reliable journey times for the receipt and delivery of their goods whilst reducing carbon;

- people can reach places of work, shops and leisure safely either locally on foot and bicycle or more distant by public transport and if necessary by low emission private car;

- town centres and public transport vehicles are designed and constructed to the highest accessibility standards, making them attractive inclusive places and easy to use by all people: young, old, and from vulnerable groups;

- people living in rural areas have appropriate electric vehicle charging infrastructure and park and ride services to enable them to reach critical urban-based services in a sustainable manner;

- air quality in our towns is improved so that it is not a danger to our health;

- communities use their rejuvenated local centres and town centres and high streets are re-imagined as the natural location for essential services; and

- adults and children make local journeys by walking and cycling because it is more convenient and socially acceptable to do so rather than by private car and for the improvement of their personal wellbeing.

4. HOW WILL WE GET THERE

Making it happen

4.1. It is important to note that *Planning for the Future of Transport – Time for Change* does not constitute new policy. The key policy documents remain: the Regional Development Strategy 2035, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement, and Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future (New Approach). These documents contain the building blocks for the Green Recovery and a better transport network. What is required is a new mind-set that focuses on the delivery of the sustainable transport goals within these policies and prioritises change.

4.2. Our approach will adopt the following three over-lapping actions:

Carbon reduction - using existing policy tools and emerging technology

Proactive planning and design – taking direct steps towards desired outcomes

Integrated land use and transport planning – securing short, medium and longer term changes if we start now.

Carbon Reduction

4.3. We need to do more and faster. We need to be more ambitious to tackle the climate crisis. Central to our approach must be the reduction of carbon arising from travel and transport in order to reduce the impact of climate change. It has long been understood that travel is not an end in itself, rather an enabler – we travel from home to a place of work or to shop or to meet friends. However, it is not inevitable that we need to travel to undertake these activities, especially with the widespread use of the internet. By reducing how much we travel and by using more energy efficient modes and active modes where possible, we can reduce carbon.

4.4. We must take full account of the structured hierarchy in reducing the carbon impact of transport:

- Substitute trips
    - ◊ Remove them completely
    - ◊ Shorten them
- Shift modes
    - ◊ Use a more energy efficient mode of transport
- Switch fuels
    - ◊ Use zero or less carbon intensive fuels

4.5. This is shown in Figure 4 – Hierarchy in Reducing the Carbon Impact of Transport.

Figure 4 – Hierarchy in Reducing the Carbon Impact of Transport
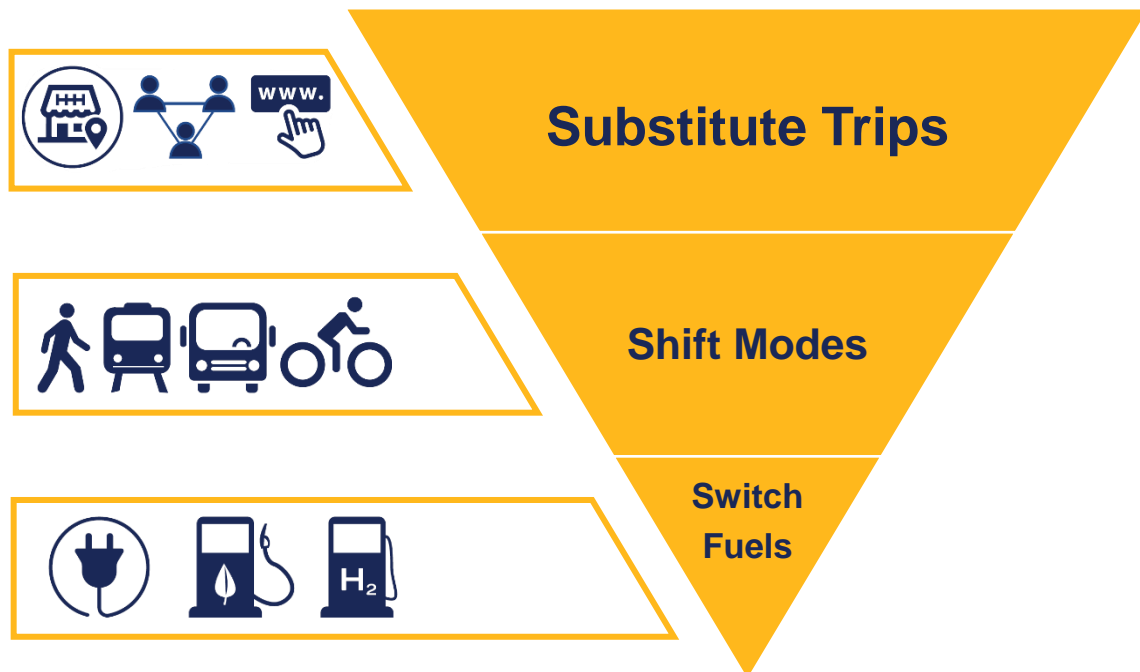
4.6. In line with this hierarchy, our first step should be to substitute trips by removing the necessity for people to travel by facilitating remote working and on-line services. In the longer term, we can reduce the length of journeys through creating local hubs – the 15 minute neighbourhood. This will require integrated working between urban planners, transport planners, private developers and central and local government to develop planning policies and spaces that bring homes and key services closer together with infrastructure solutions that support access on foot to the places and services we need.

4.7. Our second step, where we cannot eliminate the need for journeys, will focus on achieving modal shift. We want to increase the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport and, in particular, a greater proportion of shorter journeys made by walking, wheeling and cycling. We can do this by making it easy for people to travel in this way - through infrastructure development, but also through other complementary measures such as simplifying fare/ticketing on public transport and creating pedestrian zones. This builds on significant recent investments made by the Department such as the Glider rapid transit service in Belfast and in greenways and cycleways across

Northern Ireland. There will also be a need to actively manage demand by private car, especially at peak periods and in areas where private cars cause societal problems (such as safety, air quality and use of premium space).

4.8. A modal shift requires a new focus on the movement of people and goods rather than private vehicles. For longer journeys this may mean increased focus on public transport options, while settlements should adopt a modal hierarchy as part of their urban form. The hierarchy requires the prioritising of sustainable transport by:

- firstly providing for walking and wheeling,

- then providing for cycling,

- then providing for public transport,

- then providing for taxis and shared transport and goods vehicles, and

- finally, providing for private cars and motorcycles.

4.9. This is shown in Figure 5 - Sustainable Transport Hierarchy.

Figure 5 - Sustainable Transport Hierarchy

- **Walking and wheeling**
- **Cycling**
- **Public transport**
- **Taxis, shared transport and goods vehicles**
- **Private cars and motorcycles**
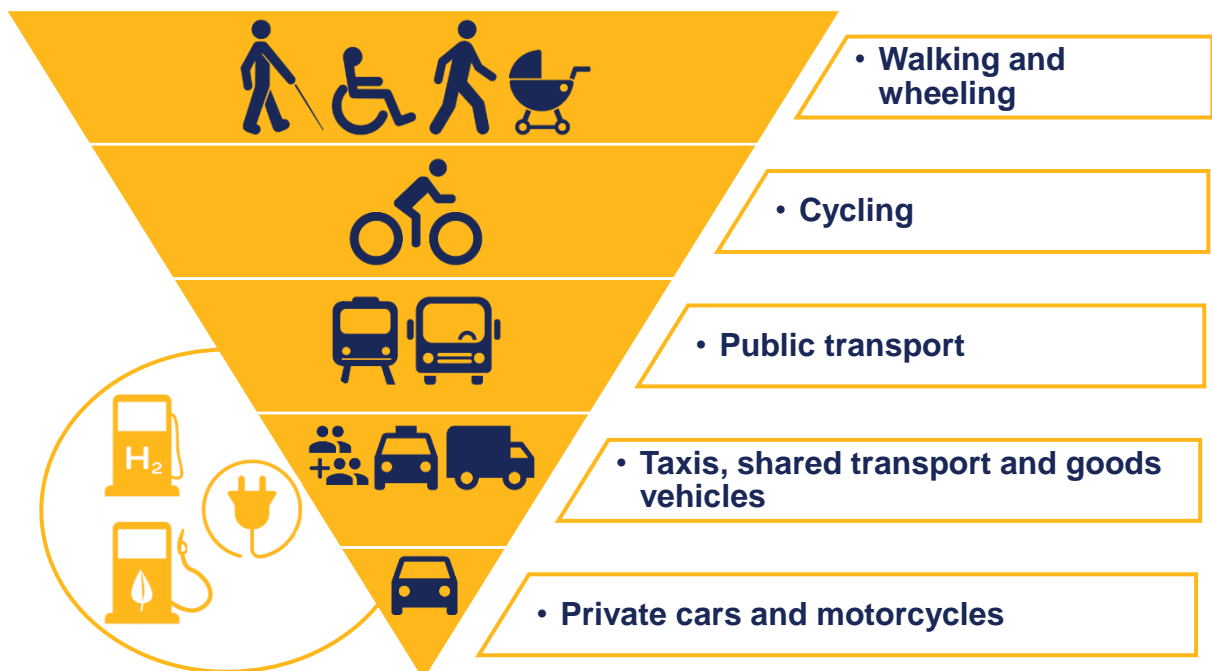
4.10.   There is also a need for us to explore other, more energy efficient modes of transport, through mobility innovation. The introduction of new technologies in the transport sector has the capability to make journeys faster, safer, easier, more comfortable and more affordable. Digital infrastructure is enabling transport modes and services to join up in ways that were previously impossible. Advances in data science, artificial intelligence and sensing technology have increased the speed of transport innovation. This is a fast-moving area and we intend to explore how these new technologies can be exploited, especially in our major urban areas. Some of the key areas which we have identified as having potential to enhance mobility choices are:

- **Micro-mobility:** such as e-scooters and e-bikes. Mainstreaming these solutions will need to be considered alongside work already being carried out to develop cycling infrastructure, as well as ensuring their safe introduction.

- **Mobility as a service (MaaS):** technology that provides the opportunity for digital services, such as phone and PC applications, to integrate various modes of transport along with providing information and payment functions into a single mobility service.

- **Shared mobility:** transport services and resources being shared amongst users, including models such as car-sharing/pooling, bike-sharing and ride-sharing. This could reduce the need for car ownership and make the choice of mode for journeys much more flexible.

- **Dynamic demand responsive transport:** flexible forms of shared public transport that respond to passenger demands for pick-up and drop-off using digital and mobile telecommunications – this could be especially important in rural areas also.

4.11.   Our focus must also be to support decarbonisation of our transport system by switching to zero or low carbon fuels. Plug-in electric cars and vans offer immediate potential however further investment will be required in our charging networks if we are to capitalise on these opportunities. The policy options for the forthcoming Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland include a proposal to develop an EV Charging Infrastructure Plan. This would be developed in partnership with key stakeholders from government, public, private and third sectors and would support

the upgrade and expansion of the network, looking not only at the forecast need for EV charge-points, but also how the infrastructure will be managed and what standards there should be. This will build on work we are already undertaking which includes introducing changes to the planning system to make it easier to replace and install charge points; investing in additional rapid charging infrastructure; and working with councils to support the installation of chargepoints on-street for those without access to off-street charging. Expansion of the EV chargepoint network will require coordinated action by a number of Departments and other bodies, to manage an increased demand for renewable electricity for example. We are committed to working with others to meet this challenge.

4.12.   In the longer term, it is expected to be another 10 to 15 years before development of Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) and Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicle (HFCV) technologies and associated infrastructure are ready to replace diesel long-haul Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs). This provides a window of opportunity for interim solutions such as biomethane-supplied CNG and LNG to support long-haul decarbonisation.

4.13.   The Department is already working to support hydrogen technology in the transport sector, purchasing hydrogen buses and supporting associated infrastructure. We also intend to build on these previous trials and work with the private sector to explore potential new trials such as hydrogen for refuse collection vehicles and electrification of the rail network through fuel cell technology.

Proactive Planning and Design

4.14.   At the heart of this change is the need to plan, design and deliver our transport schemes more quickly and decisively. A failing of current approaches to evaluating transport schemes is that they tend to perpetuate today's travel choices – in other words they work against change. Current approaches can also be overly analytical and dominated by traffic considerations, whilst they undervalue the benefits of smaller infrastructure such as walking and cycling schemes.

4.15.   The COVID pandemic has shown that people can change behaviour and that there is a desire not to return to the "old normal", in particular, of peak period private vehicle commuting and the congestion and health and environmental problems that this creates. It is accepted that we face a great deal of uncertainty in the future. The COVID pandemic will have long-lasting effects on society and our behaviours influencing land-uses (such as reduced office space) and transport (reduced commuter travel and safety concerns regarding crowding on buses and trains). Taken together, these issues suggest that a new approach is needed and it's time for change.

4.16.   We will therefore adopt an approach that is much more proactive in shaping the transport networks in order to achieve the future that we want.   This approach will draw on knowledge and experience of what different types of schemes and measures can deliver against our desired outcomes, including reduced carbon emissions and high quality urban spaces. Whilst we must recognise the uncertain future that we face, the best way is to work actively, using the knowledge that we have, towards creating the future that we want. This proactive approach will be central to our work on Transport Plans outlined in the next section.

4.17.   The adoption of a proactive plan and design approach is also consistent with the Department's commitment to:

◊ collaborative working with council planners preparing Local Development Plans;

◊ inclusive and physically accessible places and public transport vehicles;

◊ improved walking and cycling routes;

◊ new hydrogen and electric powered buses operating on enhanced bus priority routes; and

◊ new electric vehicle charging facilities, including rapid chargers.

4.18.   Our approach must also change in securing genuine integration between the planning of land use and of transport infrastructure. Again, this does not need a change of policy, rather a change in how the policy is applied in practice. The current challenges can occur at three levels.

- First, at Local Development Plan level, there are some designated zonings and allowed developments that are far distant from key services and their natural catchments, often at low densities. This has created a need to plan for longer journeys; the result is greater car use and car dependency.

- Second, in designing, maintaining and operating our own transport infrastructure and in particular our urban streets, our standard designs have failed to keep pace with the growth in car use and the streets' essential social or 'place' function. The layouts of our roads and streets in suburban and urban areas are often little different than those in open countryside and can be dominated by vehicles, both moving and parked.

- Third, as statutory consultees, when reviewing the transport requirements of new developments our findings regarding inadequate provision for active travel and public transport can be given limited weight by planning authorities. Rather historical precedents and commercial feasibility generally hold sway and developments can be built with locked in car dependency.

4.19.   The changes required in practice are necessary and can start immediately. Professionals and public sector planners and engineers will be required to apply the principles as set out below for the three levels.

- Local Development Plans prepared by the councils and local Transport Plans prepared by the Department must be prepared in an integrated and iterative manner, taking account of the Regional Development Strategy 2035, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) and any other policies or advice and guidance issued by the Department in accordance with the provisions of Section 1(3) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011. Options in terms of land use and transport must be explored, assessed and confirmed together.

This will require close and transparent inter-working between the councils and the Department.

- In planning and designing our roads and streets in suburban and urban areas, the Department will ensure policies within its SPPS continue to guide decision taking and plan making to improve connectivity and promote more sustainable patterns of transport and travel. The Department will follow the principles in its own Living Places urban stewardship document (which supports the SPPS) in addition to referring to the Manual for Streets approaches, both existing and emerging. We will also continue to take full account of the specialist needs of disabled and vulnerable people; providing inclusive built environments. This will apply to opportunities which arise for urban regeneration and community development undertaken in conjunction with key strategic partners.

- As statutory consultee for planning applications, we will rigorously apply our own Guidelines for Transport Assessment and ensure developers demonstrate that they have maximised use by active travel and public transport and minimised private car use, as laid out in policy.

5. TRANSPORT PLANS

Robust planning for a better future

5.1. The development of Transport Plans is at the heart of our approach in *Planning for the Future of Transport – Time for Change* and they need to be integrated with the new family of Local Development Plans. The approach to transport plans is set out below.

Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP)

5.2. The Department is currently developing a Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan, which is planned for publication in draft form for consultation in autumn 2021.

5.3. The RSTNTP will set out priorities for maintenance and capital improvements in our road, rail and inter-urban limited stop bus network, including park & ride, through to 2035. It can therefore impact on regional imbalance and rural transport connectivity whilst demonstrably 'changing the direction' from the previous RSTNTP and contributing to the new PfG outcomes through its selection of schemes. It must however also take account of the Executive's Flagship schemes and the commitments in the New Decade New Approach and also incorporate the contents of the current City and Growth Deals being progressed by the councils where applicable. In addition, to ensure that all schemes provide opportunity to consider the views of stakeholders, all schemes must pass statutory processes and must also be fully funded before they can be delivered.

5.4. In dealing with a mix of previous commitments and more recent changes in policy priorities, the Regional Strategic Transport Network approach will blend the pro-active planning approach to shape the future plans, in conjunction with the use of analytical models.

Local Transport Plans

5.5. Local Transport Plans will be prepared as follows.

- The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) covering the councils of Belfast City, Antrim & Newtownabbey; Lisburn & Castlereagh City, Ards & North Down, and Mid & East Antrim. This will include the Department's recent commitments outlined in the Belfast Cycle Network.

- The North West Transport Plan (NWTP) covering Derry City & Strabane;

- The Sub-Regional Transport Plan (SRTP) covering Fermanagh & Omagh; Mid Ulster; Causeway Coast & Glens; Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon; and Newry, Mourne & Down.

5.6. The development of the Transport Plans will be undertaken in an integrated manner with the councils' Local Development Plans. In particular it is the intention that the proactive planning and design approach will be able to facilitate real changes within an earlier timeframe. The Department is currently researching the feasibility of using a co-design approach involving a range of professionals and local residents and stakeholders as part of this planning process.

6. EXAMPLES OF TRANSPORT MEASURES

Context

6.1. This section outlines examples of the types of transport measures that may be expected to be brought forward in the different areas:

- Between towns (inter-urban) and cities and cross border (all island)

- In open countryside and villages for local movement

- Small towns and settlements

- Towns and cities

- Our principal cities - Belfast and Derry

6.2. In each case the examples have been chosen to indicate the area or areas in which a particular scheme would be appropriate. Possible future schemes would be subject to further assessment and may be open to public consultation in their own right.

Inter-urban and All Island

6.3. The following measures have a focus on improving journey time reliability and safety, while reducing carbon, improving local air quality and communities:

- Improved rail services, including longer trains and more frequent services requiring accessible rolling stock and localised infrastructure improvements.

- Limited stop bus services with appropriate priority over general traffic providing a high standard alternative to private car travel useable by all.

- Strategic park and ride facilities to maximise the effective catchment of rail and limited stop bus services. This may be combined with rapid electric vehicle charging facilities, and refreshment service areas.

- Feasibility studies of high speed rail on the longer distance All Island services requiring extensive track and signalling infrastructure.

- Safety schemes on major dual-carriageway roads which remove dangerous crossing junctions and provide grade-separated junctions at strategic locations.

- Bypasses of towns and small settlements and complementary local works with the purpose of improving pedestrian and place-making conditions in the town centre and journey time reliability on the major road network whilst not encouraging increased private vehicle traffic.

- Targeted schemes to tackle chronic localised road congestion providing local benefits without creating additional new traffic.

Open Countryside and Villages

6.4. Measures in the open countryside and villages focus on improving transport connectivity to local centres whilst providing a network of safe local roads which contributes to community uses. Some examples are:

- Local road safety schemes in the vicinity of schools and other community facilities which slow traffic and encourage walking and cycling.

- Targeted road safety schemes whose design does not encourage additional private car use.

- Designation of suitable roads near villages as 'quiet roads' with reduced speed limits.

- Demand responsive public transport using accessible vehicles and innovative inclusive methods of communication to provide more cost effective and useable services for all.

- Local park & ride and park & share facilities providing sustainable transport linkages to the inter-urban network.

Small Towns and Settlements

6.5. The walkable scale of our small towns and settlements offer natural opportunities to ensure that active travel, people and communities are put first in the design and operation of the local transport network. The measures include:

- Local road safety schemes in the vicinity of schools and other community facilities which slow traffic and encourage walking and cycling;

- Targeted road safety schemes whose design does not encourage additional private car use;

- High quality pedestrian and cycling facilities reinforcing active travel as the preferred mode whilst ensuring inclusive designs;.

- Suitable provision for centrally located bus stops and waiting facilities;

- Sensitively located public parking with integrated rapid electric vehicle charging points reducing vehicle dominance and encouraging 'park & stride';

- Inclusive streetscape designs that create places for social interaction whilst recognising the needs for essential goods vehicle servicing at key times; and

- Road designs that ensure low vehicle speeds consistent with a road user hierarchy, with pedestrians most important and private cars least important.

Towns and Cities

6.6. Provision and use of transport in our larger towns is key to making a difference in how many of us lead our lives; whether we live there or whether we travel there for work, education, shopping, leisure, personal business or health purposes. This will be built upon the re-worked transport hierarchy headed by pedestrians and with private cars at the bottom. The example measures represent a substantial reconfiguration of our existing urban road networks and will require substantial investment over a number of years. The example measures include:

- Town centre place-making schemes which stress the importance of our high streets at the centre of many key activities and useable by all.

- High quality inclusive pedestrian facilities which allow people of all ages and abilities to walk and wheel safely and comfortably to and through the town centre and to amenity areas segregated from traffic or with priority over it.

- A continuous cycle network, segregated from general traffic, which allows people of all ages and abilities to travel safely by bicycle in and around the urban area.

- Parking strategies prepared and delivered jointly by the Department and the councils to actively manage the cost and availability of spaces to contribute to a reduction in vehicle dominance in town centres and a natural transfer to walk and cycle modes.

- Mobility hubs convenient to public transport services and with rapid electric vehicle charging points and personal car or bike hire.

- Town bus services which enable people without cars, and people with impairments to mobility, to conveniently travel to key town centre facilities, with key bus priority to deliver operational efficiency.

- Traffic management to reinforce the urban road hierarchy (pedestrians first, private cars last) without creating additional new traffic.

- New road links only where essential to ensure safe access to new development.

Belfast and Derry

6.7. Belfast and Derry are our major cities where population and development densities offer opportunities for public transport to play a key role with active travel in making them attractive places to live, work and socialise. Central to delivering the change is community agreement on how road space within the urban core is allocated between pedestrians, cyclists, buses and general traffic. The following example schemes are expected to feature:

- Central pedestrian priority district and complementary streets useable by all, where private and goods vehicles are permitted at exceptional times only and for specific purposes.

- Self-contained inclusive neighbourhoods with local streets prioritised for pedestrians and cyclists, and all key services within a 15 minute walk (approximately 1.5km) including a mobility hub with rapid electric vehicle charging points and personal car or bike hire.

- High quality centrally located public transport hubs where there is a focus of public transport routes and convenient interchange is provided.

- City centre parking strategies prepared and delivered jointly by the Department and the councils to actively manage the cost and availability of spaces, to contribute to a reduction in vehicle dominance in town centres with the aim being that public transport and cycling are the least expensive and most convenient mode of travel.

- Rail services linking the city centre with its outer catchments using modern accessible vehicles, fares and information systems.

- Modern attractive and accessible urban bus vehicles with off-board ticketing and on-road priority to ensure fast and reliable journey times, competitive with private car within the urban core. Bus Rapid Transit designs will be adopted on the routes with potential for greatest patronage and modal shift from private car.

- Segregated cycle networks providing a safe sustainable alternative for medium length journeys within the urban core. The Belfast Cycle Network document sets out the Department's commitments.

- Blue-green infrastructure combining essential water infrastructure with off-road walking and cycling routes to provide a permanent community asset.

- Edge of City Park & Ride to provide a sustainable travel option for travellers without access to direct public transport services to the city centre.

7. What Happens Next

| Setting out the journey

7.1. *Planning for the Future of Transport – Time for Change* outlines the Department's priorities for the future planning of transport across the North and how these can be translated into decisions on how the transport networks will be managed and developed in the next 10 to 15 years, in support of the Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework. A key requirement is that the Department must plan to reduce travel and to effect a change in travel behaviour, away from polluting and carbon intensive modes to cleaner and more healthy modes. The change must also be effected quickly.

7.2. This approach will be used to help guide the work of the Department in a number of specific areas:

- In developing the RSTN Transport Plan.

- In preparing Local Transport Plans in conjunction with the Local Development Plans prepared by the councils.

- In redesigning or reconfiguring our roads and streets in suburban and urban areas to deliver high quality inclusive places.

- As a statutory consultee for planning applications.

7.3. We must make a bold step, based upon our recent experiences, towards the implementation of a greater range of schemes, including smaller more sustainable inclusive schemes, which can deliver against a wider range of outcomes.

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