

Geraldine O'Neill
Sub-Regional Transport Plan Team
Transportation Unit, Roads Service
Department for Regional Development
Room 3 – 29 Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8GB

19th June 2006

Dear Geraldine

RE: Sub Regional Transport Plan 2015

Dungannon & South Tyrone would like to thank the Department for Regional Development for the opportunity to respond to its consultation document on the Sub Regional Transport Plan 2015.

The Council would like to raise a number of concerns relating to future transport proposals and to seek further clarification on key areas.

Please see attached Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council's comments on the draft SRTP 2015. The Council would like to seek further clarification on the proposed roads development and maintenance for Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough and corresponding budget, and how this relates to the region.

To arrange to meet or to provide further clarification on roads development and maintenance please contact Claire Linney (Corporate Strategy and Policy Officer) on 028 87720300.

Yours sincerely

John Campbell
Chief Executive

Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council

Comments on the proposed Sub Regional Transportation Plan 2015

1. Highway Measures

1.1 Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council welcomes the commitment from the Department to introduce traffic management measures, measures to reduce bottleneck at key junctions and measures to direct traffic away from where there are high pedestrian flows in general towns and cities. However it does have a number of specific comments, [see attached comments relating to the technical supplement for Dungannon as prepared by the Dungannon Regeneration Partnership.](#)

1.2 In terms of new roads to provide access to new development areas and new roads to provide congestion relief to the town centre or other environmentally sensitive areas. The Council would seek further clarification as to proposals for a small town as Coalisland, which is experiencing major congestion problems throughout the day. It would also seek information on what is being proposed for villages and rural areas in the Borough.

1.3 The Council would seek clarification as to the proposed highway measures, routine maintenance, bridge strengthening schemes and street lighting capital programmes and associated finance provision for Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough.

2. Bus Provision

2.1 In terms of rural bus provision the Council welcomes the commitment from the Department to new service provision in towns with a population of 10,000 or more. However it would question why the proposed operating period across Northern Ireland favours areas in the BMA region, given that Dungannon is recognized as a main hub.

2.2 It would provide for greater strategic linkage if the key hubs of Coleraine – Cookstown – Dungannon – Armagh - Newry were linked as a key transport corridor, similar to that of other main hubs and given the absence of a rail corridor along this route.

2.3 Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council welcomes the Plans proposal to refurbish the town bus station and implement a programme for people with disabilities. Given the strategic importance of the SRTP Council assumes that what is proposed in this plan is automatically agreed for implementation and a realistic timescale set in partnership with Translink.

2.4 The Council would like to seek clarification on the criterion used to deliver the innovative door-to-door bus service in areas for people with disabilities. What is there criterion used to identify the areas chosen for this service (Ballycastle, Ballyclare, Ballynahinch, Kilkeel, Magherafelt, Newcastle,

Portrush, Portstewart and Warrenpoint) and what are the proposals to roll this out to other areas to accommodate people with disabilities.

3. Rural Provision

3.1 Bus services in rural areas of Northern Ireland continue to be an issue. Whilst it is stated that a number of services may not seem economically viable, as stated in your document, they are a social necessity, particularly given that 20% of rural households do not have access to a car.

3.2 In relation to identifying the need, business case for provision of a rural bus service, it is important that the supply and demand factor is considered. For example the document states that the percentage of people using public transport to travel to work is consistently low in rural areas, around 4 – 5 % in rural settlements and only 3% people in a small hamlet or open countryside. Given that a bus only accesses a rural settlement once a day return and 3 times per week return this would not be too startling. If the supply was provided then the demand figures may be quite different.

3.3 The commitment to provide innovative demand responsive transport services to isolated rural communities through taxi buses, shared taxis and social car schemes are critical. The proposed 6 million pound to provide a shared taxi scheme is not a vast sum of money given the overall commitment to transport across the region.

3.4 It is important that good practice rural transport schemes are included which would provide good value for money. At present rural community transport schemes established as voluntary partnerships are running effective rural demand responsive schemes, particularly targeting vulnerable section 75 groupings such as Older people and people with disabilities. Sourcing of funding for rural community transport schemes remains an issue.

3.3 Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council would welcome a Rural Rover service in rural areas across Northern Ireland. It would like to seek further clarification to the criterion used to implement this service as a pilot in South West Fermanagh and Newcastle to Belfast, particularly in light of diagram 4.2. It would also seek a realistic timescale to develop a much-needed service in an isolated rural area such as Dungannon Borough.

3.4 School transport provision remains an issue for rural areas. At present key school transport services are being cut which is having an impact on rural schooling. There is also a knock on impact on other government initiatives such as childcare and women back to work and health initiatives in terms of children having longer bus journeys and waiting times.

3.5 The Council would seek clarification as to the proposed highway measures, routine maintenance, bridge strengthening schemes and street lighting capital programmes and associated finance provision for rural areas and OUA within the Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough.

3.6 The Council would question 341 million in terms of network management for rural and OUA areas, given that the full cost for initiatives in these areas is 315.2 million. The cost for managing the road network inclusive of staff, buildings and information technology is greater than the initiatives planned.

4. Developer Responsibility

4.1 Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council welcomes the innovative step by the Department to ensure developers are responsible for the provision of transport links from residential development areas to the built up areas.

5. Timetables and Information

5.1 Given the changing social structure of Northern Ireland in terms of a more diverse population. It is important that information is provided in other languages particular in areas in the region most relevant such as Dungannon, Armagh, Cookstown, Craigavon areas. This is of particular necessity to public transport given that the migrant worker population, in the majority, does not have access to a car.

6. Technical Supplement Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough

6.1 Please see attached comments on the proposed technical supplement that Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council endorses as part of its response to the SRTP.