Senior Executive Officer

Planning Department

Kildare County Council,

Áras Chill Dara

Devoy Park

Naas

Co. Kildare

W91X77F

23 May 2022

**Re: Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Department of Transport welcomes the comprehensive Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029. The department published its new National Sustainable Mobility Policy on 7 April 2022. This sets out a policy framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland’s overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The targets of the policy are aligned with the transport target metrics in the 2021 Climate Action Plan of 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys and a 10% reduction in kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars by 2030. The new policy builds upon and replaces old sectoral policy documents: *Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020,* and the *National Cycle Policy Framework*. The council may wish to take note of this policy and remove the references to the old policies.

Many of the key policy objectives on transport in Chapter 5, Sustainable Mobility & Transport, of the draft county development plan align with the key areas of the new sustainable mobility policy such as the importance of integrating land use and transport policies and the delivery of high-quality pedestrian and cycling networks as part of the transition to a climate resilient society.

Since the previous development plan was published there have been important policy developments which are relevant to accessible, integrated, and sustainable public transport. The department considers these should be reflected in the proposed plan.

1. **Accessible public transport for All, and especially for Persons with Disabilities, Reduced mobility and Older People**
* the “whole of Government” **National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2022** includes specific actions assigned to local authorities. For example, action 108 relates to the ‘dishing’ of footpaths and action 109 relates to accessible infrastructure, including bus stops. Lack of dishing is often cited as a major concern for wheelchair users. The department welcomes the text, ‘strive to adapt existing infrastructure to become more accessible,’ (TM 03 on page 8 of Chapter 5: Sustainable Mobility and Transport).
* the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD**) ratified by Ireland in 2018. The UNCRPD puts obligations on State Parties to ensure access for persons with disabilities to, for example, the physical environment and transportation in both urban and rural areas.
* the **DMURS Interim Advice Note – Covid-19 Pandemic Response** published in 2020. It includes guidance that designers should ensure that:
	+ measures align with the principles of universal design,
	+ consider Government policy on accessibility for people with disabilities and
	+ consult people with disabilities to further appraise measures.
* References in the draft Plan to the 2019 version of DMURS should be replaced with references to the 2020 DMURS Interim Advice Note – Covid-19 Pandemic Response, for example on page 25, TM 055, Chapter 5 Sustainable Mobility and Transport.
* To make public transport fully accessible to people with disabilities requires a **‘whole journey approach**’. This refers to all elements that constitute a journey from the starting point to destination. Local Authorities are a key stakeholder by ensuring a universal design approach to the built environment’. This including footpaths, tactile paving, cycle paths, roads, pedestrian crossing points, town greenways and bus stops/shelters. The department welcomes the text, ‘ensure the application of universal design principles in all new transport infrastructure (including public transport pick up points)’, (TM 03 on page 8 of Chapter 5: Sustainable Mobility and Transport).
1. **Public Transport in rural areas**
* The department welcomes the support for the TFI Local Link Rural Transport Programme (TM 036 on page 21 of Chapter 5: Sustainable Mobility and Transport) and the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan in the draft County Development Plan (TM 010 on page 15 of Chapter 5: Sustainable Mobility and Transport.)

The council may wish to include a reference to the new National Cycle Network (NCN) launched by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) on 4 May 2022 and to refer to it in Action TM A13 on page 19 of Chapter 5: Sustainable Mobility and Transport.

Yours sincerely,

*Reform, Central Policy and Communications*

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**An Roinn Iompair**

*Department of Transport*

**Lána Líosain, Baile Átha Cliath, D02 TR60**

Leeson Lane, Dublin, D02 TR60