Department for Infrastructure

An Roinn Bonneagair

Depairtment fur Infrastructure

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Transport Strategy 2035

CONSULTATION DRAFT JUNE 2025

Ministerial Foreword

I am delighted to share with you the draft Transport Strategy to 2035, setting out a clear vision for a transport system that enables economic growth, strengthens regional balance, and enhances our connectivity.

Transport is fundamental to the growth and development of our society, influencing how we live, work and connect. A modern, efficient, and sustainable transport system is essential for our future prosperity. As we look to the future, we face new challenges and opportunities that demand a fresh approach to transportation and a collaborative effort to create change.

This draft Transport Strategy is the beginning of a bold and necessary journey to ensure that our transportation system meets the demands of tomorrow, while reflecting the values and priorities of our community today.

Through this draft, I have set out a comprehensive vision that is both actionable and adaptable; that addresses both urban and rural connectivity; creates a cleaner and greener foundation for growth; and recognises my commitment to improving regional balance.

I recognise that transport is not just about infrastructure, it's about the people who rely on it daily. My commitment is to build a system that is safe, efficient, and inclusive, ensuring that everyone—regardless of their location, income, or ability—can access the opportunities they need to thrive.

This draft strategy is an important first step, and I encourage you to engage in this consultation, share your views, and help shape a transport system that works for all and safeguards the environment for future generations.

LIZ KIMMINS
Minister for Infrastructure

Contents

Transport Vision 2035

To provide a **sustainable, safe, accessible and effective transport system** which meets the region's climate change requirements, serves the needs of urban and rural communities, and supports economic growth.

About the Transport System

2022-2023

13.8 million rail passenger journeys **in 2023-24.** The rail network comprises of approximately **223 route miles** across five lines with 22 stations and 32 halts.

There are **three main airports** in Northern Ireland, Belfast International Airport, George Best Belfast City Airport, and City of Derry Airport.

A total of **8,063,561 passenger movements** in and out of NI Airports took place in the twelve months to November 2023.

64.4 million **bus passenger journeys** made in 2023-24 on 1,392 vehicles.

In 2023-24, trains and buses travelling some **43.7 million miles.**

The Road network consists of over **25,922km of public roads** with over **9,700km of footways, 5,800 bridges** and approximately **290,000 streetlights** and is an asset of approximately £36Bn.

The road network has an extensive network of signage, traffic signals, controlled pedestrian crossings, and other **traffic monitoring and management infrastructure.**

Connecting communities by running the **Strangford Ferry** and managing the **Rathlin Island Ferry** Contract

The estimated total tonnage through NI's major ports was **27.5 million tonnes** in the twelve months to June 2023.

Additionally, a total of **610,970** non-freight vehicles passed through NI Ports.

There are **5 commercial ports in NI.**

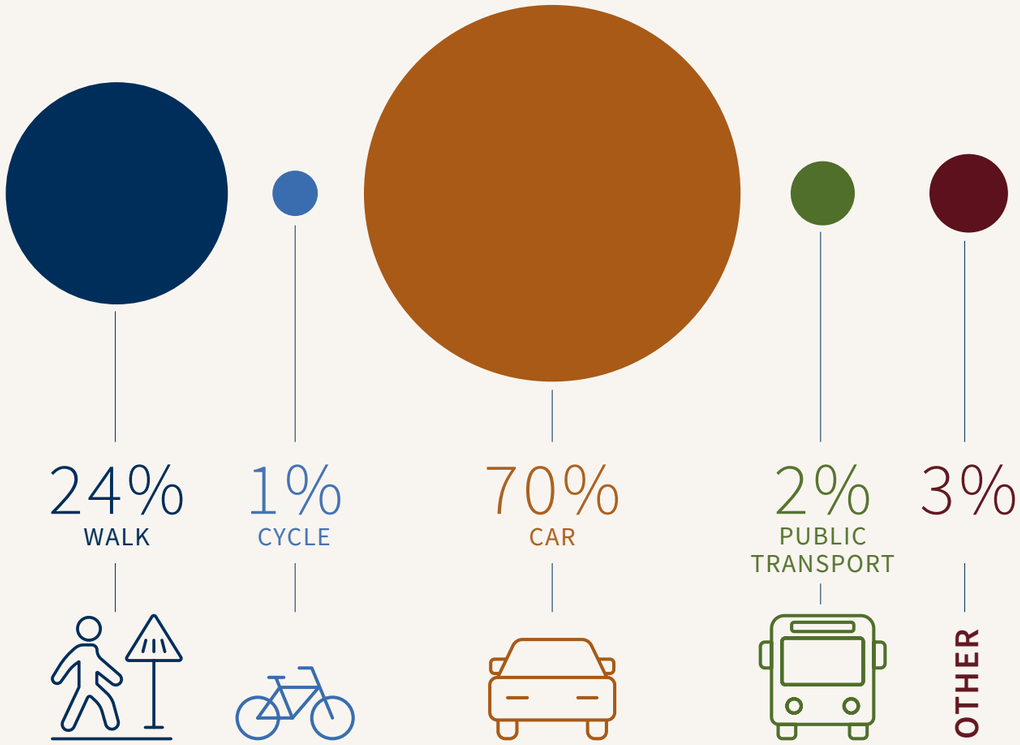
4 Public Trust Ports - Belfast, Foyle, Warrenpoint and Coleraine; and **1 is in private ownership** - Larne, which is owned by P&O Ferries Group.

How we Travel

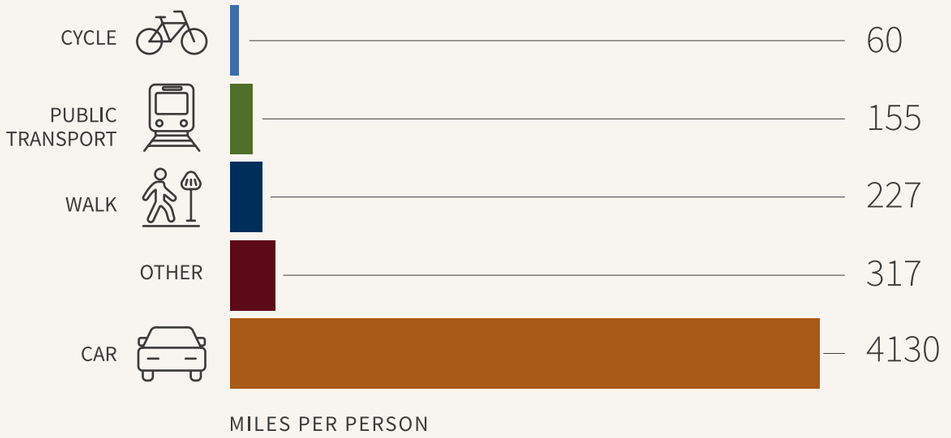
FIGURE 1: **How we Travel**

24%	4,940	838	141
24% of people living in a household whose day to day activities are limited **do not have a car or van** available for use.	On average, Northern Ireland **residents travelled 4,940 miles.**	The average number of **journeys made** per person was **838.**	In 2021 the average person made **141 car journeys** of **under 2 miles.**

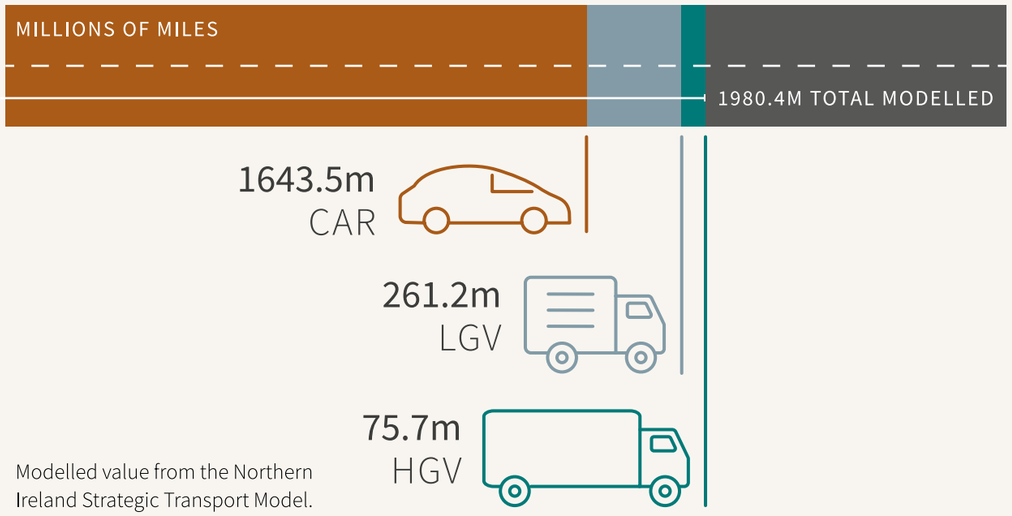
Average Journeys Per Person by Travel Mode



Average distance travelled per person by Travel Mode



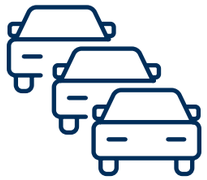
Vehicle Distance on NI Roads in 2023



Modelled value from the Northern Ireland Strategic Transport Model.

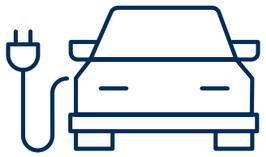
The Need for Change

Traffic Congestion



Travel here is highly dominated by private vehicles, more so than any other region in the UK. In NI in 2021, 70% of all journeys were made by private car with only 24% of journeys made by walking, 2% by public transport and 1% by cycling with the remaining journeys made by taxis, motorcycles, and other modes. Car dominance detracts from the quality of urban areas and can result in traffic congestion that increases carbon emissions and air pollution. Traffic congestion has a direct impact on the economy through lost productivity and increased costs for businesses and consumers.

Climate Change



Climate Change poses a major global challenge. Through the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 we are committed to reducing NI emissions and have identified a pathway to decarbonize the domestic transport sector. The latest reporting Green House Gas (GHG) inventory (2022)highlights that domestic transport is the second largest emitting sector in NI (after agriculture), and road transport emissions are its main source.

The inventory also highlights that domestic transport (and agricultural) emissions are still above the 1990 reported baseline figure. Emission savings have been generated from advancements in technology over the last 30 years, however these savings from improved vehicle engines and fuels for Internal Combustion Engines (ICE) vehicles have been cancelled out by the increasing numbers of ICE private vehicles on the network, and the number of vehicle journeys being undertaken across all distances (short and long).

Health & Wellbeing

There are growing rates of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease here. In 2023/24, around two-thirds of adults were either overweight (37%) or obese (28%), this is an increase in the obesity rate from 2010/11 that was 23%. NI is also reported to have the highest prevalence of mental health problems in the UK with psychiatric morbidity in NI 25% higher than in the rest of the UK.

A transport system that encourages more people to want to travel by active means, for all or part of their journey, can play a role in improving people's mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Road Safety

Every death or serious injury on the road network is a tragedy and there remains much work to do to make road transport safer for all users.

Improving safety for all is critical for encouraging an increase in the percentage of journeys made by active travel and public transport. It is also central to good placemaking and for creating an inclusive transport system.

Equality

Over time, an assumption that access to services and opportunities will be achieved by private car has disadvantaged large sections of our society, in particular people with disabilities and low-income households. This can limit their life choices and result in social exclusion and disadvantage.

Only 45% of social housing tenants in NI have access to a car, significantly lower than the NI average. Additionally, areas of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry that have the lowest car ownership can experience some of the worst impacts from traffic congestion, such as poor air quality. This means those who contribute least to the problem can feel the impacts the most.

Although there have been significant improvements in the provision of accessible travel options, the reality is that for many people transport remains a major issue and barriers remain.

Local Action that Contributes to Global Change

The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals provide an internationally agreed set of high level interconnected global targets to address environmental, economic, and social challenges. The four high level strategic priorities of this Strategy are mapped to the Sustainable Development Goals ensuring that the task of change is approached holistically and is shared equitably across society. This will ensure that local communities enjoy the benefits from a more sustainable transport system while also looking towards our global commitments.

Strategic Priorities for Transport

This strategy is developed around four Strategic Priorities for Transport, each of which contribute to Sustainable Development Goals. These Strategic Priorities for Transport reflect the contribution that the transport system can make to the improvement of people's everyday lives, and to our society in general.

The priorities reflect the collective responsibility of everyone - government, business, and individuals, to embed sustainability into the decisions we make.

Under each strategic priority there are a range of transport measures. They do not operate in isolation rather they will work together to holistically achieve the Transport Vision for 2035.

Our Strategic Priorities are that Transport:

01 Is Resilient and Sustainable
PAGES 16-49

02 Supports Connected and Inclusive Communities
PAGES 50-69

03 Is Safe and Healthy
PAGES 70-75

04 Supports Green Growth
PAGES 76-81

01

Is Resilient and Sustainable

A carbon neutral transport system that is resilient and adaptable to a changing climate and the needs of communities and businesses.

The Climate Change Act

1. The Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 (CCA) sets the legal target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions (carbon emissions[1]) by 2050, with challenging bridging targets for 2030 and 2040. These ambitious legislative targets represent a decisive change in our approach to decarbonisation, requiring a step change in all sectors to achieve this.
2. After agriculture, domestic transport is the second largest emitting sector in NI, accounting for 18% of all emissions as shown in Figure 2.
3. For the last 30 years the carbon emissions from the transport sector have broadly remained above the 1990 baseline reporting figure. During this time, emission savings have been generated by technology advancements in Internal Combustion Engines (ICE) and fuels, however these have been offset against the increasing number of ICE vehicles on our networks and the length of journeys they travel. The growth of new electric vehicles will play a pivotal role in decarbonising the transport sector here, supported by a change in behaviours and a recognition that it will need to be implemented in a 'just' manner.
4. Going forward it will not be sufficient to simply show that our transport decisions avoid emission increases. Decisions will need to proportionately demonstrate how they contribute to the wider transport decarbonisation programme as well as delivering other sustainability objectives. The Department has a duty to "exercise its own functions, so far as is possible to do so, in a manner that is consistent with the achievement" of net-zero.
5. This does not mean that every decision must result in a reduction in carbon emissions. Some decisions that result in increased emissions may be necessary to support wider strategic priorities. However, these decisions must not impede the wider transport decarbonisation programme.
6. Given the geographical characteristics of NI, not all places will be able to decarbonise in the same way and at the same pace. It is expected that, in the near term, larger urban areas will lead decarbonisation efforts with smaller carbon reductions coming from smaller settlements and rural areas. Longer distance journeys will also offer the potential for significant carbon reductions. Transport in all areas will need to almost completely decarbonise by 2050.

1 In this strategy the word carbon is used to refer to all the greenhouse gases as defined in Section 60 of the CCA.

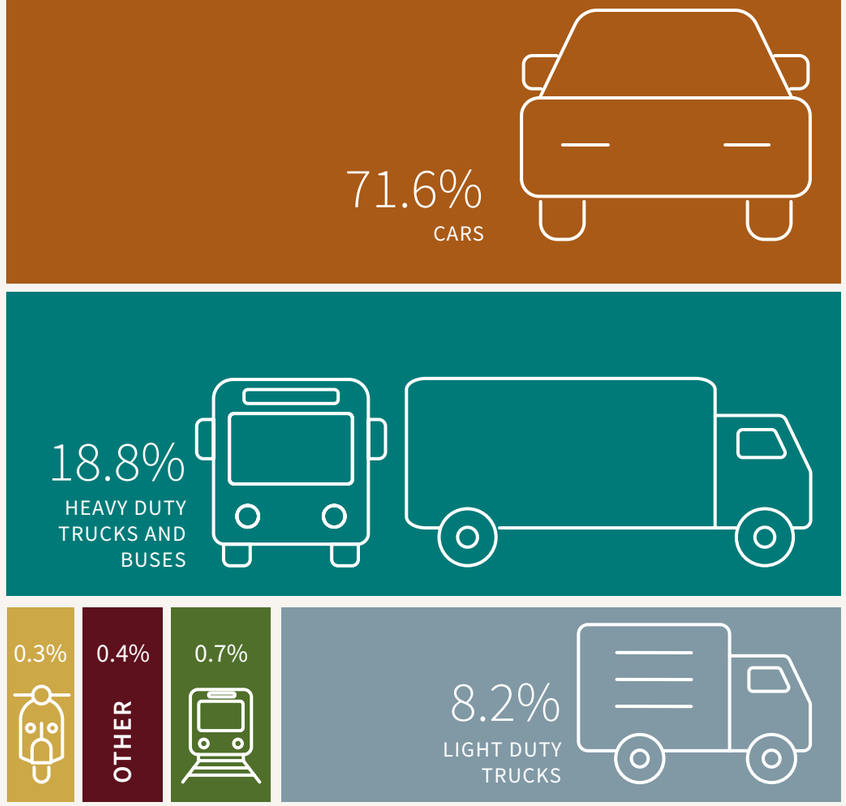
7. The actions required to meet the 2030, 2040 and 2050 emission reduction targets will be set out in a transport sectoral plan. These actions and targets will link closely to the development and delivery of the Transport Plans that the Department is responsible for.

8. To provide an evidential basis for transport decarbonisation, the Department has developed the NI Transport Emissions Model (TEM). This model, along with other data and evidence, is being used to support policy, planning and operational decisions and will ensure that the Department's actions, as a whole, will see a reduction in emissions from transport. The TEM will also help identify where more work is required to ensure we meet our responsibilities in the CCA.

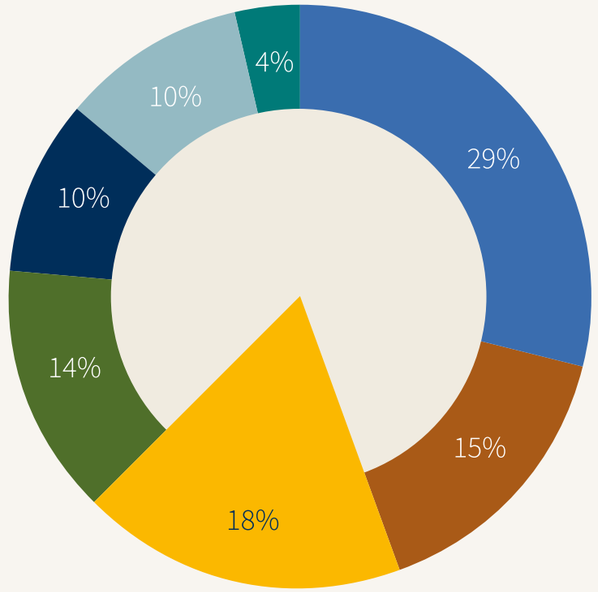
Windmills on the rolling hills of a countryside, Fermanagh

FIGURE 02: **Transport GHG Emissions**

NI GHG Emissions from Surface Transport by type 2022

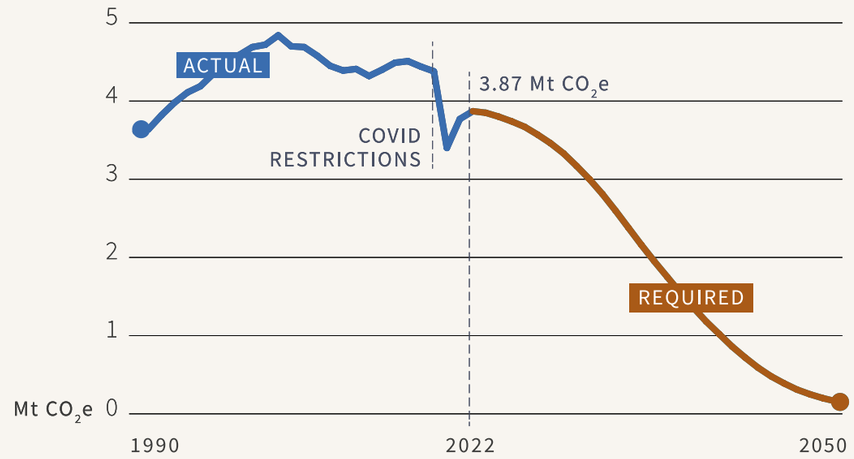


NI GHG Emissions by Sector 2022



Sector	$MtCO_2e$
Agriculture	6.21
Buildings and product uses	3.27
Domestic transport	3.87
Electricity supply	2.98
Industry	2.07
Land Use Change	2.16
Waste	0.77

GHG emissions from transport and projected reductions to met 2050 target



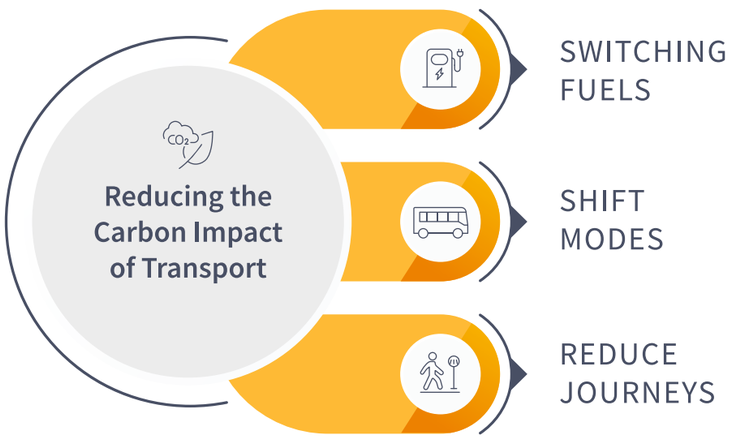
Reducing the Carbon Impact of Transport

9. The Department has a three-pronged approach to reducing the carbon impact of transport: switching fuels, shifting modes and reducing journeys, as shown in Figure 3.

10. The TEM has allowed the Department to consider various transport decarbonisation pathways and their ability to deliver against emission reduction targets. This has identified that, by a large margin, the switching of fuels to zero emission and low emissions vehicles (ZEVs / LEVs) provides the most realistic and deliverable means to reduce transport carbon emissions. This takes account of a range of factors, including settlement patterns and travel behaviours. Therefore, the transition to ZEVs and LEVs will be at the centre of the Department's approach to reducing the carbon impact of transport.

11. Shifting modes and reducing the length of journeys are also important for transport decarbonisation, and these are the most sustainable solutions when consideration beyond direct tail pipe emissions is taken into account. It is recognised that shifting modes and reducing journeys can have a significant impact on reducing congestion within our urban areas - supporting clean, green and vibrant city and town centres. These measures can also improve people's health and wellbeing, and support the social inclusion of all members of society.

FIGURE 03: **Reducing the Carbon Impact of Transport**



Switching Fuels

12. Switching fuels is critical to our transport decarbonisation pathway and is explained later in this Strategy under the heading Zero and Low Emission Fuels.

13. However, simply transitioning to alternative fuels is insufficient to deliver a sustainable transport system and therefore, there is a need to facilitate increased use of other modes in order to meet environmental, economic and social objectives related to emissions, congestion and car-dependency.

14. Some journeys will always need to be undertaken by private vehicle. For example: journeys in more rural areas, where public transport services are more limited; journeys where health or mobility make other modes infeasible; or journeys by people working in occupations which require regular travel to multiple locations such as tradespeople or those working in the community.

15. In NI, freight is moved almost exclusively via road transport. In this sector the options currently for reducing vehicle kilometres travelled and electrification are also more limited. Therefore, a focus on switching to alternative fuels will be required.

Shifting Modes

16. This seeks to encourage more people to replace some, or all, of their private car journeys with more sustainable modes where it is feasible to do so. Achieving modal shift will require a range of complementary measures that prioritise and promote sustainable modes.

17. The Travel Survey for Northern Ireland found that the average journey undertaken in NI is around 6 miles, with the private car being the dominant mode of travel. This relatively short journey distance presents an opportunity for modal shift, particularly in our towns and cities where the average journey is shorter again.

18. To achieve this there needs to be viable alternatives that are safe, accessible, reliable, efficient, and affordable.

19. Providing stand-alone active travel and public transport improvements will be insufficient to generate the level of change required. We will also need to consider ways to make sustainable travel options more desirable than private car journeys where possible, especially in our larger towns and cities.

Reduce Journeys

20. This seeks to reduce the need, length and frequency of private car journeys, particularly for single car occupancy trips. This change requires better physical and digital connectivity, appropriate local services, and the facilitation of home working and remote working hubs.

21. This requires integrated working between town planners, transport planners, private developers, and central and local government. It needs solutions that efficiently bring people and key services closer together. This can be through digital services and through integrated transport and land-use planning that provides for homes that are close to people's everyday needs.

MEASURE **RS01**

Building our understanding, and reducing the Carbon Impact of Transport, is a priority for the Department.

Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning

22. The planning system has a key role to play in supporting transport priorities. The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), councils' Local Development Plans (LDPs), and guidance within Living Places will continue to guide decision making to improve connectivity and promote more sustainable patterns of transport and travel.

23. In tandem with the councils' LDPs the Department is preparing a suite of new transport plans. Integrated LDPs and Transport Plans are fundamental to future sustainable development. The Departments transport planners and councils' LDP teams have been working closely together to ensure that the policies, land use allocations, and key site requirements of LDPs are closely linked with the transport policies, proposals and investment identified in the transport plans.

24. The Department is preparing eight new transport plans in total. This will include a regional plan, covering the Strategic Transport Network and 7 Local Transport Plans (LTPs) covering council areas.

25. The regional plan for the Strategic Transport Network is concerned with the future development of the strategic road network, the limited stop interurban buses which run on them, and the rail network across all of NI. The Strategic Transport Network is shown later in Figure 10.

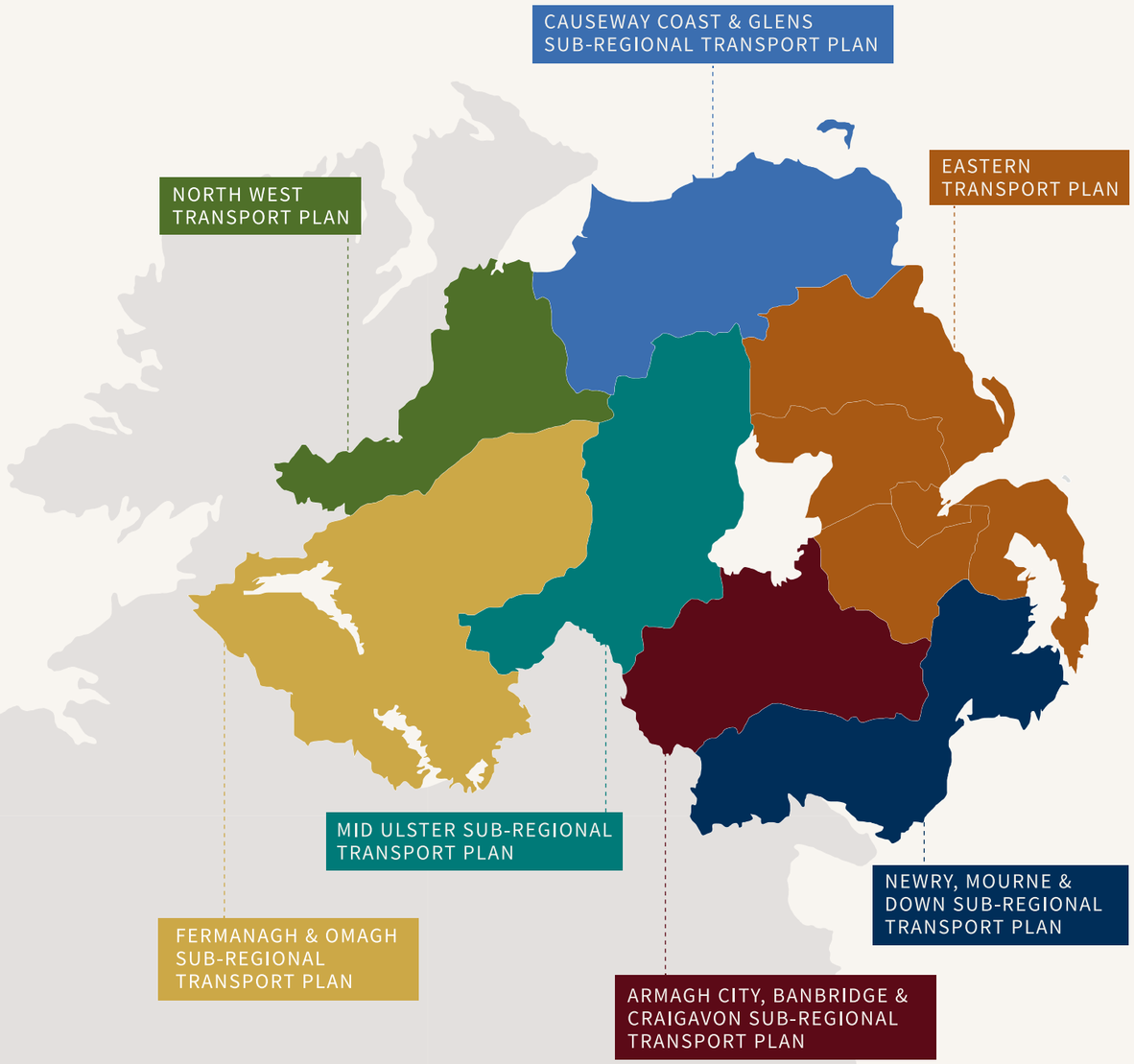
26. The local transport plans consider the shorter, local transport movements. Figure 4 shows the transport plan areas.

27. The transport plans allow for an assessment of the current transport issues and needs of an area and then seeks to address these by identifying a range of new transport policies and measures. This may include new active travel or road schemes, changes to how road space is used (such as new bus priority measures), or new public transport services and infrastructure.

28. The transport plans may also identify where changes to parking provision or the introduction of other transport measures (such as road user charging) could support the transport and placemaking objectives for an area. The preparation of the transport plans has a heavy focus on stakeholder engagement and will allow local people to shape and influence the creation of more sustainable transport for their community.

29. The transport plans provide a strategic level assessment of transport needs and solutions. Before any individual scheme or policy measure is advanced, it will need to undergo its own relevant decision-making processes, such as legislative approval, feasibility studies, and environmental and equality assessments.

FIGURE 04: **Local Transport Plans**



Vision and Validate Approach to Transport Planning

30. Past approaches to transport planning focused on predicting future travel demand and providing capacity for that travel. This used historical traffic patterns, specifically peak commuter traffic, and socio-economic trends to determine the future need for infrastructure. This approach could result in decision makers favouring private vehicle road-based solutions, often at the expense of sustainable modes. This reinforced the status-quo of private vehicle use.

31. The Vision and Validate approach has been widely adopted by the transport planning discipline as a better way of achieving sustainable transport outcomes. It starts with setting a vision of what we are seeking to achieve, and then, through a validation process identifies the infrastructure and services needed to deliver that vision.

32. The Vision and Validate approach will focus on the movement of people and goods rather than vehicles. This will help to ensure that appropriate sustainable transport measures are considered at the outset and are then incorporated into a realistic and achievable design. Ultimately, this will improve the quality of individual transport and land use schemes and support our Strategic Priorities for Transport.

Vision and Validate and the Transport Plans

33. The Vision and Validate approach recognises that roads and streets often have dual functions. They facilitate the 'movement' of people and goods by various modes of transport, as well as providing 'places' for people and activity. The Vision and Validate approach can establish a shared vision that can balance both the movement and place functions of areas.

34. To ensure that this dual function of our transport network is considered, a Place and Movement Framework (PMF) will be established in the transport plans. This framework can be used to broadly describe the characteristics of each street or road depending on the character of the area, how it prioritises place and movement and the types of transport measures that will support the Vision for the transport plan.

35. Different road types can have the same movement function or the same place function, albeit for different underlying reasons. For example, a RSTN road can have high movements of vehicles, whereas a town centre can have high movements of pedestrians. The key thing is they cannot share the same place and movement function. The RSTN road has a low place function, whereas a town centre has a high place function.

36. Figure 5 provides an example of a Place and Movement Framework.

37. Providing sustainable transport solutions cannot be achieved through a one-size-fits-all approach and the PMF will be supported by individualised approaches to network planning and design. Factors such as available road widths and the functioning of the network will influence what transport measures can be introduced and the degree to which it is appropriate or possible to promote one road user over another.

38. Many urban roads will seek to adopt a Sustainable Hierarchy of Transport Users that promotes walking and wheeling, then cycling, then public transport, with private vehicles at the bottom. However, in some location's local constraints such as limited road space and network function means the needs of vehicles will remain a key consideration in planning and design. This is to ensure necessary car trips (those where there is no viable alternative) and freight movements are facilitated and managed.

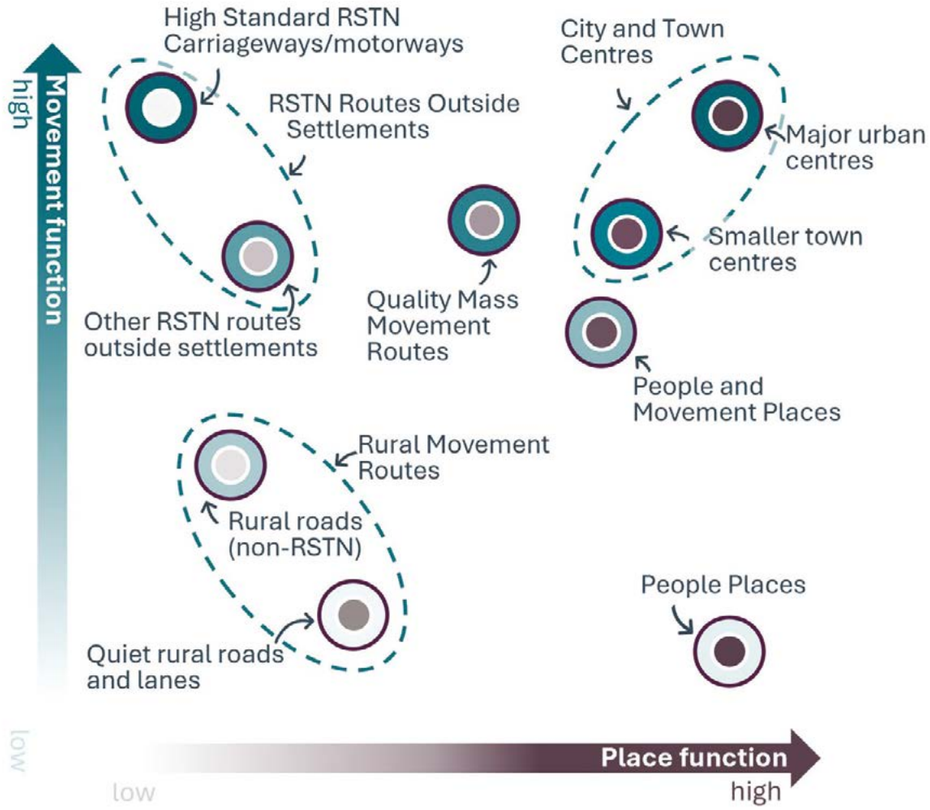
39. Figure 6, Figure 7 and Figure 8 illustrate how the PMF and a Sustainable Hierarchy of Transport Users can inform the planning and development of the transport network.

40. Within any hierarchy, the requirements of disabled people will be fully considered with appropriate solutions identified.

MEASURE **RS02**

The Department will apply the Vision and Validate approach in the planning and development of the transport system.

FIGURE 05: **Example of a Place and Movement Framework**



Examples of Transport Modes

FIGURE 06: **Place and Movement Categories**

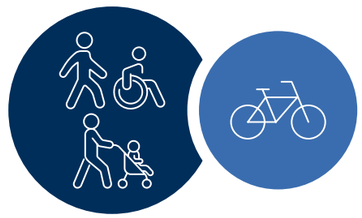
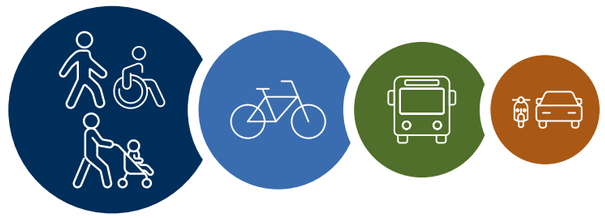
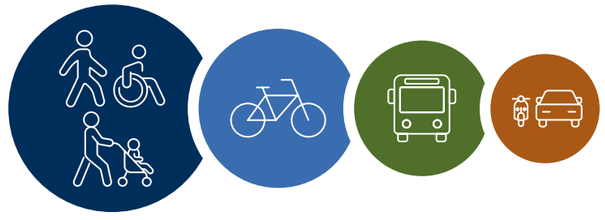
EXAMPLES OF AREA TYPES INDENTIFIED IN A TRANSPORT PLAN		
TRAFFIC FREE ROUTES		Traffic free transport routes facilitating active travel connections, including greenways. As with all active travel infrastructure, these will consider the needs of the most vulnerable road users first.
PEOPLE PLACES		Neighbourhood areas including residential streets. Sustainable transport hierarchies may promote walking/wheeling and then cycling, followed by public transport and then private vehicles. Measures may include enhanced active travel provision, the reduction in speed limits (to 20mph) and other road restrictions (such as restricting HGVs).
CITY AND TOWN CENTRES		Destination places that also facilitate high volumes of delivery and access movements. Sustainable transport hierarchies will seek to support economic vitality and placemaking. This may promote walking/wheeling and then cycling, followed by public transport and then private vehicles. The access needs of people with reduced mobility, and businesses will remain important considerations. Measures may include a reduction in speed limits (to 20mph) and the reallocation of road space to sustainable modes and placemaking.
PEOPLE AND MOVEMENT PLACES		Mixed use places that serve the local community. Sustainable transport hierarchies will need to reflect the character of the area and may generally promote walking/wheeling and then cycling, followed by public transport and then private vehicles. Measures may include a reduction in speed limits (to 20mph) and the reallocation of road space to sustainable modes.

FIGURE 07: **Place and Movement Categories**

EXAMPLES OF AREA TYPES INDENTIFIED IN A TRANSPORT PLAN		
QUALITY MASS MOVEMENT ROUTES		Routes that facilitate high volume of movement into urban areas, focused on public transport. Sustainable transport hierarchies may seek to give greatest priority to public transport. The requirements of other road users will need to reflect the character of the area and the function of the network, balancing the promotion of active travel, while maintaining vehicle movements. Measures may include bus priority measures, including the reallocation of road space.
CONNECTING MOVEMENT ROUTES	Routes that facilitate connecting movement within settlements.	Sustainable transport hierarchies will need to reflect the character of the area and the function of the network, balancing the promotion of active travel and public transport while maintaining vehicle movements.
RSTN ROUTES (Inside Settlement)	Routes that are part of the RSTN and are located within settlements. These facilitate both local and strategic movement. These can be City/Town Centres, Connecting Movement Routes, People and Movement Places and/or Quality Mass Movement routes.	These routes will need to provide for vehicle movements while also reflecting the character of area and promotion of active travel and public transport.
RSTN ROUTES (Outside Settlement)		 Routes, outside settlements and are part of the RSTN. They are the primary road network connecting main settlements and gateways. These will continue to provide for public transport and private vehicle movements (particularly the movement of goods / freight). Active travel infrastructure will be provided and promoted only where it is appropriate.
RURAL MOVEMENT ROUTES	Routes that connect settlements but are not part of the Strategic Transport Network. These will continue to provide for vehicle movements with active travel and public transport measures where it is appropriate.	On quieter rural roads and lanes measures may seek to promote active travel while discouraging traffic not requiring access. Measures may include a reduction in speed limits and other road restrictions.

Behavioural Change

41. Supporting the decarbonisation of the transport sector, at the pace required by the CCA, will require a change in people's travel behaviour. Behavioural change encompasses a wide range of measures which aim to encourage and incentivise sustainable travel.

42. Travel choices can be complex and are influenced by several factors. This includes personal characteristics such as age, gender, learned behaviour/ habit, and income. They can also depend on where people live and/or work, caring responsibilities, geography, availability of transport, convenience, and the built environment.

43. The reasons why people are travelling have also changed. For example, more time spent on leisure activities means people are choosing to travel greater distances to take part in outdoor pursuits. Also, the changing nature and location of work, and the move to more online services and retailing has transformed many people's behaviour in recent years.

44. In support of achieving our carbon emission targets and creating a healthier society, we need to encourage people to think differently about how they travel and appreciate the collective difference that small personal changes can make.

45. Investing in sustainable modes of transport, and successfully encouraging people to think about how they travel and consider choosing a sustainable way to make that journey, will have a significant impact on the environment, as well as on our society's general health and well-being.

46. The Consumer Council published research on the Decarbonisation of Transport in June 2023, the results of which are summarised in Figure 9. Understanding attitudes towards travel is key to implementing changes so people can make their own sustainable travel choices and create a better transport system for everyone. Research found that:

> "Consumers generally agree that there is a need to reduce congestion and to reduce carbon emissions in towns and cities. Transferring their journeys to public transport is the obvious answer for them, but many say that comfort, convenience, timetabling and safety need to be improved before they would consider using it instead of their cars. People with families who travel with buggies do not see buses as a viable alternative, and those whose journeys are complicated say that using public transport to get from A to B via C and D would be challenging."

47. Measures such as improving road safety, improving the attractiveness of public transport, and active travel promotion and education will all support behavioural change. However, it is recognised that these will need to be complemented by actions that disincentivise ICE cars, especially within our urban areas. This will require clear messaging in relation to the benefits – both on a personal and societal level - that sustainable transport can bring.

MEASURE RS03

The Department will make effective use of communication tools to encourage behavioural change.

FIGURE 08: **Consumer Council research on the Decarbonisation of Transport (2023)**

Reducing Private Car Use

61%

Believe that it would be **difficult to reduce** their **use of private cars** (easy, 28%). This rose to 78% for those living in rural areas.

65%

Support traffic calming measures to reduce the speed of traffic to accommodate other road users.

56%

Support increasing the number of **cycle lanes**.

Living in a **rural area** with a **lack of nearby public transport** is the most common reason consumers believe it would be **difficult to reduce** their use of **private cars** (25%), with the convenience offered by a private car over public transport cited by 18% of consumers and being disabled or having mobility problems cited by 9% of consumers.

30%

Support congestion charging for those driving into cities and large towns in Northern Ireland.

73%

Feel they **need more information** before deciding to change the way they travel.

Younger consumers said they would be **prepared to pay more** on average to **park their car**, with those who most often use a car to get about saying they would be prepared to pay less compared with those who most use alternative forms of transport.

Increasing the use of Public Transport

25%

Say they are **dependent on public transport** but most consumers say they are not (75%).

16%

Used public transport in the past but no longer use it.

Those more likely to say they are **dependent on public transport** included **younger consumers**, those in **lower social grades,** those with a **disability** and those in **lower income groups**.

<1/2

Less than half of consumers believe that public transport in Northern Ireland is **affordable (49%)**, **convenient (45%)** or is **frequent enough** to meet their needs **(36%)**.

29%

Say **poor service availability/frequency** is the **single biggest barrier** to using **public transport** (locationally inconvenient to access public transport, 20%: cost, 15%).

29%

Never think about using public transport.

28%

Regular user of public transport.

5%

Planning to start using public transport.

13%

Starting to think about using public transport.

9%

Recently started using public transport.

Travel Demand Management

48. Travel demand management aims to influence travel behaviour (how, when, and where people travel) to increase the efficiency and resilience of the transport system. It is also about achieving other policy objectives (such as reducing congestion, improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions from transport).

49. Demand management is about making it easier and more desirable to travel by the most sustainable means. Demand management is not about stopping people from making their own travel choices.

50. To outline the range of potential measures necessary to manage and shape demand on the transport system, the Department will develop a Demand Management Framework (DMF). The Framework will be based around three key pillars:

    - Creation of Capacity
      These measures include (but are not limited to) the reallocation of road space and/or the provision of new space for active travel and public transport priority measures. It also includes a rationalisation of public transport routes and timetables to improve frequency and better serve local need (including those with reduced mobility), demand and capacity.
    - Network Management
      These measures include (but are not limited to) improvements in public transport ticketing systems as well as more accessible timetables, real time information, vehicle restrictions around schools, residential areas and urban centres, as well as the optimisation of traffic signal timings to promote active travel and public transport.
    - Behavioural Change
      As outlined in the previous section, these measures are wide ranging and encourage and incentivise sustainable travel behaviour.
      It will be an integral part of the Department's work over the period of the Transport Strategy.

51. The DMF will consider how best practice from other places could be applied in NI. The Framework will also consider potential economic impacts and the potential impacts on communities, particularly for disabled people and those with reduced mobility. The DMF will consider the sequencing/timing of demand management measures in parallel with the delivery of improved sustainable mobility alternatives.

52. Development of the DMF will require a strong focus on stakeholder engagement, and cross-Departmental and local government collaboration.

MEASURE **RS04**

The Department will develop a Demand Management Framework.

Reallocation of Road Space

53. The prioritisation and reallocation of existing road space in our urban areas towards public transport and active travel will be a key measure to support the Department's strategic priorities for transport.

FIGURE 09: **Illustrative Road Space Requirements by Mode**

54. Reallocating existing road space to better facilitate public transport and active travel infrastructure will be key to providing the efficient and effective movement of people in our larger towns and cities.

55. Road space may also be reallocated to create better urban places for people to enjoy, for example, as part of a pedestrianisation scheme. This can encourage active travel, stimulate economic activity, support council place shaping plans and improve the environmental and urban quality of the area.

56. When considering the reallocation of road space, the needs of people with disabilities, goods delivery, and servicing vehicles will be considered.

57. Reallocation of road space will, where appropriate, be subject to stakeholder engagement and the relevant statutory processes. When reaching a decision, the Department will give significant weight to our policy priorities of creating modal shift, improving road safety, reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality and improving the quality of the urban environment.

MEASURE **RS05**

The Department will implement a programme of road space reallocation as a means of achieving the following:

- Providing sufficient capacity for sustainable modes;
- Improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists; and
- Encouraging mode shift from the private car and reducing emissions.

Evidence Based Decision Making

58. The Department will invest in evidence collection and robust data-led decision-making tools. This will support robust decision making and the identification of key priorities that align with the Department's vision for transport and allow for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

Data

59. Data plays a significant role in understanding the current state of the transport system. As travel patterns evolve with emerging technologies, climate goals, and societal needs, the Department recognises the critical need to invest in the collection, management, and use of both traditional and new data sets - including real-time mobility data, active travel metrics, freight movement, and behavioural insights. A more strategic and integrated approach to data will enable better decision-making, targeted investment, and responsive policy development. The Department will work collaboratively with industry, academia, and public sector partners to establish data-sharing frameworks, improve data quality, and enhance analytics capacity. Key actions will include investment in digital infrastructure, the development of a Transport Data Hub for Northern Ireland, and the adoption of open data principles to support innovation, accountability, and public engagement.

Transport Modelling

60. The Department developed a suite of strategic transport modelling tools that can estimate the transport impacts of land-use decisions, infrastructure changes, transport policies, and changes to transport services (such as public transport). The strategic modelling tools cover all NI with greatest detail provided in the cities of Derry/Londonderry and Belfast.

61. Transport modelling will provide the default evidence base for many of the Department's decision-making processes. This will ensure a consistent and transparent approach to developing a sustainable transport system.

62. To facilitate this consistent and transparent approach, the Department is working towards making this suite of strategic transport modelling tools available to appropriately experienced external users, with the expectation it will be used in the transport assessment process of planning applications where the scale, location or impact would warrant this approach.

63. Transport modelling is not suitable for all decision making, for example the nature, location and scale of some decisions would not warrant, or cannot utilise transport modelling processes.

MEASURE **RS06**

The Department will invest in enhancing and collating its data evidence gathering including the use of innovative technology and techniques.

MEASURE **RS07**

Where appropriate, the Department's transport modelling tools will be the default evidence base.

Zero and Low Emission Fuels

64. NI is working collaboratively with nations across the UK to phase out new non-zero emission cars, vans, motorcycles, scooters and Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

65. Responsibility for the policy and regulation of zero emission fuels, and the associated infrastructure, is spread across many public bodies. Moving to zero emission fuels will involve collaborative efforts across a wide range of public and private stakeholders from the energy and transport sectors and require the adaption of NI's energy infrastructure and the transport system.

MEASURE **RS08**

The Department will work collaboratively with nations across the UK to phase out new non-zero emission cars, vans, motorcycles, scooters and Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

Electric Vehicle Uptake

66. The Department's research shows that there are a range of factors that can influence the take up of EVs, including purchase and resale prices, overall running costs, vehicle range and availability of public charge points.

67. The Department has established the EV Infrastructure Task Force to bring together representatives from government, consumers, energy providers and industry, to consider the EV infrastructure required to deliver a fit for purpose, modern accessible EV charging network.

68. The Task Force published the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Action Plan in November 2022. This Action plan agreed key actions that were critical enablers to provide greater confidence and certainty for the EV market. These actions have delivered encouraging commercial market developments and have been enhanced by the introduction of the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandate and Vehicle Emissions Trading Schemes. These interventions alongside a new approach to direct stakeholder engagement are collectively driving Electric Vehicle uptake and creating demand and stability in the vehicle retail, and commercial charging infrastructure markets.

Alternative Fuels

69. UK Government policy on the transition to zero emissions is technology neutral. Key market and technology interventions will dictate the best solutions for zero emission cars, vans, motorcycles and road freight. Whilst battery electric is likely to dominate the car and van sectors, it is expected that battery electric, hydrogen fuel cell, and other alternative fuels, will have both interim and longer-term roles to play in the decarbonisation of the HGV sector.

70. For lighter vehicles in the logistic markets battery electric solutions are already widely used. Solutions for long-

haul HGVs are also currently available, with industry considering and trialling various options including electric, hydrogen and also synthetic fuels.

71. Alternative fuel technologies, such as biomethane or biofuels such as Hydrogenated Vegetable Oils may provide interim solutions in delivering CO2 emissions reductions until the zero-emission technologies and associated refuelling infrastructure under development are more prevalent in the HGV market. Moving to both zero emission fuels and interim alternative fuel technologies in this sector will be heavily influenced by developments in GB, Ireland, and across Europe given the international nature of supply chain logistics.

MEASURE **RS09**

The Department will continue to work with other public authorities and stakeholders to support the development of alternative fuel options on the transport system.

Decarbonising Public Sector Fleets

72. Considerable funding has already been provided or committed for the purchase of zero and low emission buses. The focus to date has been in the metropolitan areas of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry where battery electric and hydrogen fuelled vehicles have been deployed, improving air quality in those areas.

73. In addition to decarbonising the public transport fleet, the Department is working with other departments and local councils, to explore options to meet the Executive's commitment for all departmentally owned or leased cars and vans being zero emission by 2035.

74. The Department will also continue to consider how alternative fuels can be adopted to decarbonise the plant and machinery we use to manage the transport network.

MEASURE **RS10**

The Department will continue to work with public sector partners to increase the overall percentage of zero emission vehicles in the public sector fleet.

MEASURE **RS11**

The Department will continue to work with Translink on the ongoing decarbonisation of the bus fleet.

Decarbonising the Rail Network

75. Decarbonisation of the rail network will take time and significant investment. To ensure the right decarbonisation solutions are identified the Department will continue to work with Translink. This will consider the most appropriate option for decarbonising the region's railways and will identify which sections of the network are best suited to electrification, battery electric, hydrogen, or multiple options. In the meantime, when purchasing rolling stock, the Department will explore options for these to have the capability for conversion to decarbonised fuel options at a later date.

MEASURE **RS12**

The Department will work alongside Translink on a rail decarbonisation strategy.

Embodied Carbon Emissions from Transport Infrastructure

76. Embodied carbon emissions from infrastructure are the carbon emissions associated with materials and processes throughout the whole lifecycle of construction. It includes any emissions created during the manufacturing of materials (extraction, transport, manufacturing), the transport of those materials to the construction site, and the construction practices used. It also refers to the emissions produced in subsequent maintenance and any disposal of end-of-life materials.

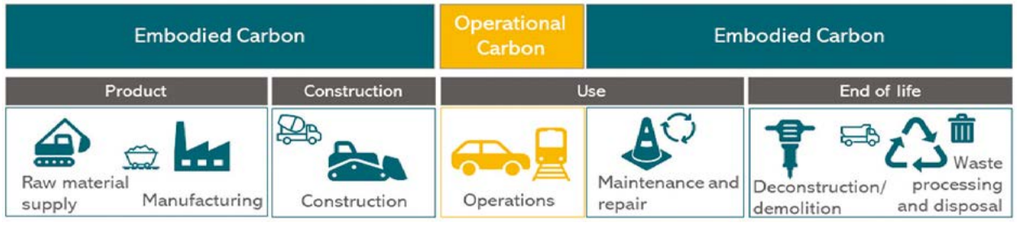
77. For example, in a typical road development project, the production of materials represents about 70% of the embodied carbon, with concrete and asphalt the main emitters. There is no method of reducing embodied carbon after construction. This is why the amount of embodied carbon produced or potentially produced must be addressed now to meet short and long-term climate targets.

78. To inform the broader management of carbon emissions from infrastructure projects across NI (not just transport), the Department alongside the Strategic Investment Board and others are developing a climate and environment framework for infrastructure projects as part of an Enabling Action Plan to support the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

79. This will support the assessment of the carbon impacts of infrastructure projects during all stages of their lifecycle, including concept, delivery, operation and decommission, as well as help inform policy decisions, and will provide for a consistent application of carbon and environment standards in project design and delivery.

MEASURE RS13

The Department alongside the Strategic Investment Board will publish a climate and environmental framework for infrastructure projects.



Ecologically Responsible

80. The way in which the Department delivers infrastructure services can have a positive impact on the natural environment.

81. The Department has published its Environmental Mission Statement for Infrastructure Development and Management. The Environmental Mission Statement, is used to guide the work of the Department to ensure that there is an environmental focus through all the Department's activities - from major works to smaller projects.

82. This will include the use of nature-based solutions that can protect, restore or sustainably manage ecosystems in order to promote both human well-being and biodiversity, and/or provide other environmental, social and economic benefits.

83. The continuing development of the Department's transport evidence base and modelling tools will also support evidence-based decision making through the statutory environmental assessment process.

MEASURE RS14

The Environmental Mission Statement for Infrastructure Development and Management will be used to guide the planning, design and delivery of transport.

Wildflower planting along New Active Travel Route, Coleraine Ring Road

Resilience

84. Resilience is the ability of the transport system to withstand the impacts of adverse events, and to recover promptly from its effects. This can include extreme weather events, major accidents, and equipment or infrastructure failures.

85. Exposure of transport systems to adverse events is influenced by the age, condition, and location of infrastructure. The impact from disruption is influenced by the character of the network in terms of journey movements or number of areas and services supported.

86. Potential disruption from adverse events in the future is likely to increase for two main reasons.

87. First, because of climate change and an increase in the intensity and frequency of storms leading to more frequent and severe flooding events, land instability, including landslides and landslips, falling trees and damage to structures. Sea level rises and increases in the height of storm surges may also affect port operations and damage and/or disrupt coastal transport systems and defences. The Department's actions to manage and adapt to the risks of climate change are recorded in the NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme.

88. The second strategic driver of lower network resilience is the aging state of much of our transport infrastructure, particularly the road network. Prolonged underinvestment in maintenance has weakened the inherent resilience of the network and left it more exposed to problems that cannot always be fixed promptly and often require more extensive and costly interventions when they fail. Good maintenance of transport infrastructure is an essential part of enhancing resilience so that it is less susceptible to failures during adverse events. As a result, the Department will need to consider its strategic approach to achieve the right balance between investment in maintenance activities and other aspects of asset management such as adding to or developing the network.

89. To enhance resilience the Department considers the latest flood risk management advice in the planning and design of new transport infrastructure. In addition, as part of the NI Civil Contingencies Framework, the Department and its transport partners have preparedness plans to prepare, respond and recover from adverse events.

90. Providing a range of transportation options for people's journeys also increases resilience. For example, having viable and accessible public transport or active travel alternatives during a road closure may allow people to still make their journey by alternative means and help to reduce pressure on the other diversionary traffic routes around the disruption.

Enterprise Train on railway passing over Craigmore Viaduct, Newry

02

Supports Connected and Inclusive Communities

A transport system that facilitates sustainable and inclusive connections to social and economic opportunities close to where people live and further afield.

A quality urban environment that people can use and enjoy and allows everyone to participate in society.

Inclusive Transport

91. A fundamental principle of good design is ensuring that places and travel are accessible and inclusive for as many people as possible. This means enabling both disabled people and non-disabled people to use space, transport and travel generally in the same way.

92. The Department recognises that the current design of some of our transport system and spaces can create barriers for disabled people and others with reduced mobility. Narrow cluttered footways, the absence of dropped kerbs, a lack of accessible crossing points or a complex and confusing streetscape can make everyday journeys challenging.

93. In addition, parts of the public transport network have limited accessibility for those with reduced mobility. The Department continues to engage with Translink about improving accessibility on services and at stations and stops. Many issues can be overcome through improved fleets and infrastructure, but some issues are harder to address. In particular, the nature of some older train stations can make a fully accessible environment harder to achieve.

94. People with hidden disabilities or communication barriers, such as autism or learning difficulties can also struggle to access transport. Training and education for staff plays an important role in changing attitudes and ensuring that people who require a little more understanding and support can access transport with confidence.

95. The Department will build in accessibility as a condition of public investment in our transport system and spaces. To achieve this, we will use best practice design standards including Inclusive Mobility and adhere to the latest statutory and technical requirements at a minimum. The Department will continue to keep advice and guidance under review to ensure the highest standards of accessibility can continue to be met.

96. The Department recognises the importance of engaging with people with disabilities and their organisations when planning and making changes to travel and spaces. We will continue to engage directly with the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and other stakeholders in the preparation of the transport plans and in the development and implementation of schemes to ensure investment provides safe and accessible travel and places for everyone. Proactive engagement is also key to the Department meeting its statutory obligations around the promotion of equality and good relations.

MEASURE **CC01**

The Department will ensure people with disabilities and additional mobility needs are reflected in the design and management of the transport system.

Urban Design and Placemaking

97. Placemaking is the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, invest and spend time in. Quality urban design will encourage more people to choose to walk, wheel, cycle or use public transport by making the overall experience safer, more accessible, and attractive.

98. The Department's Urban Stewardship and Design Guide, 'Living Places' establishes the key principles behind good place making. It seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing (stewardship) and making (design) urban places, with a view to raising standards across NI.

99. The Department will continue to incorporate the guidance within 'Living Places' in the planning and development of the transport system. This includes removing unnecessary traffic from urban areas to create inclusive space for people and sustainable modes of transport.

100. The Department will continue to work with the Department for Communities and with the councils to ensure a holistic approach is taken to public realm that recognises and balances placemaking and transport functions. The multi-stakeholder approach in the preparation of the transport plans has a key role in supporting integrated transport and quality urban design.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

101. Most women and girls have become used to limiting how, when and where they travel due to gender-based violence and harassment.

102. Violence against women and girls is an umbrella term used to cover a wide range of harm, abuse, and violence against women and girls because of their gender. Some women and girls may face particular risks to their safety, such as those with disabilities.

103. Violence against women and girls can lead to significant and lasting impacts. Acknowledging the scale of this violence, and the impact it is having on their lives is an important first step in addressing the problem.

104. The safety of all users is already a feature of the planning and design of the transport network. This may include appropriate lighting and ensuring that crime and the fear of crime is considered in the urban design of transport schemes though measures such as passive surveillance.

105. To support the Executive's Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls the Department and our partners will use our communication channels to promote positive attitudes and behaviours to prevent violence against women and girls on the transport network.

106. Translink has implemented a range of initiatives to maintain safety and a high level of service. This includes collaborative working in a multi-agency approach to create a safe environment for women and girls using public spaces, including public transport services, ensuring everyone can travel with confidence. Translink's front line staff also promote a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of antisocial behaviour including gender-based harassment.

MEASURE **CC02**

The Department support the whole of government, whole of society approach to end violence against women and girls.

Transport Integration

107. A sustainable and low carbon transport system requires the opportunity for people to move from one mode to another easily. For example, walking or driving to/from a bus stop; cycling to a train station; changing from one bus to another; using a park and ride facility; or using a mobility hub to transfer to a bike share or use of a car club.

108. The integration of transport modes will be a key consideration in the preparation of the transport plans and in the design of individual transport schemes.

Park and Ride / Park and Share

109. Due to the dispersed settlement pattern in NI, there are a substantial number of people who do not have access to high quality public transport by active travel from their home.

110. Park and Ride/Share can allow people who are reliant on a private vehicle at an early point in their journey to transfer to public transport services or shared transport for their onward journey. This may be at formal Park and Ride / Park and Share sites or through informal parking arrangements along the transport network. These increase the usage of public transport and maximise the value of investment in existing and new schemes.

111. Park and Stride sites can remove traffic from urban centres by allowing private vehicle users to park at the edge of settlements or urban centres and use active travel modes to continue their journey into the centre. These sites can be particularly useful for towns that serve rural populations with high private vehicle dependency.

112. The Department will further develop and increase the capacity and attractiveness of Park and Ride/Share. This will include creating new, or enhancing existing, Park and RideShare sites and by providing better infrastructure along transport routes, such as improved shelters and waiting facilities.

MEASURE CC03

The Department will further develop, and increase the capacity, of Park and Ride/Share and Share facilities.

Mobility Interchanges

113. Mobility interchanges are places on the transport system where different services intersect. The Department will continue to invest in high-quality interchange facilities or Mobility Hubs to ensure that the full benefit of transport investment is realised by linking services and infrastructure.

MEASURE CC04

The Department will invest in high-quality interchange facilities and/or Mobility Hubs to ensure that the full benefit of transport investment is realised by linking services and infrastructure.

Regional Strategic Transport Network

114. The Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) incorporates NI's railway network and the Strategic Road Network that includes the five Key Transport Corridors (KTCs), four Link Corridors, the strategic routes in the Belfast Metropolitan Area, and the remainder of the trunk road network. In addition, it includes:
    - Inter-urban bus services primarily using the RSTN and serving Hubs, including cross-border services.
    - Park & Ride (P&R) / Park & Share (P&S) sites serving an inter-urban bus service or a rail station or located on the RSTN.

115. The RSTN provides the principal routes for moving goods and people throughout NI. The RSTN enables economic activity across the region, addresses regional imbalance, facilitates connectivity to services and opportunities, and provides access to the gateways. As such the maintenance and improvement of the RSTN remains a key priority for the Department when planning, funding, and developing the transport system.

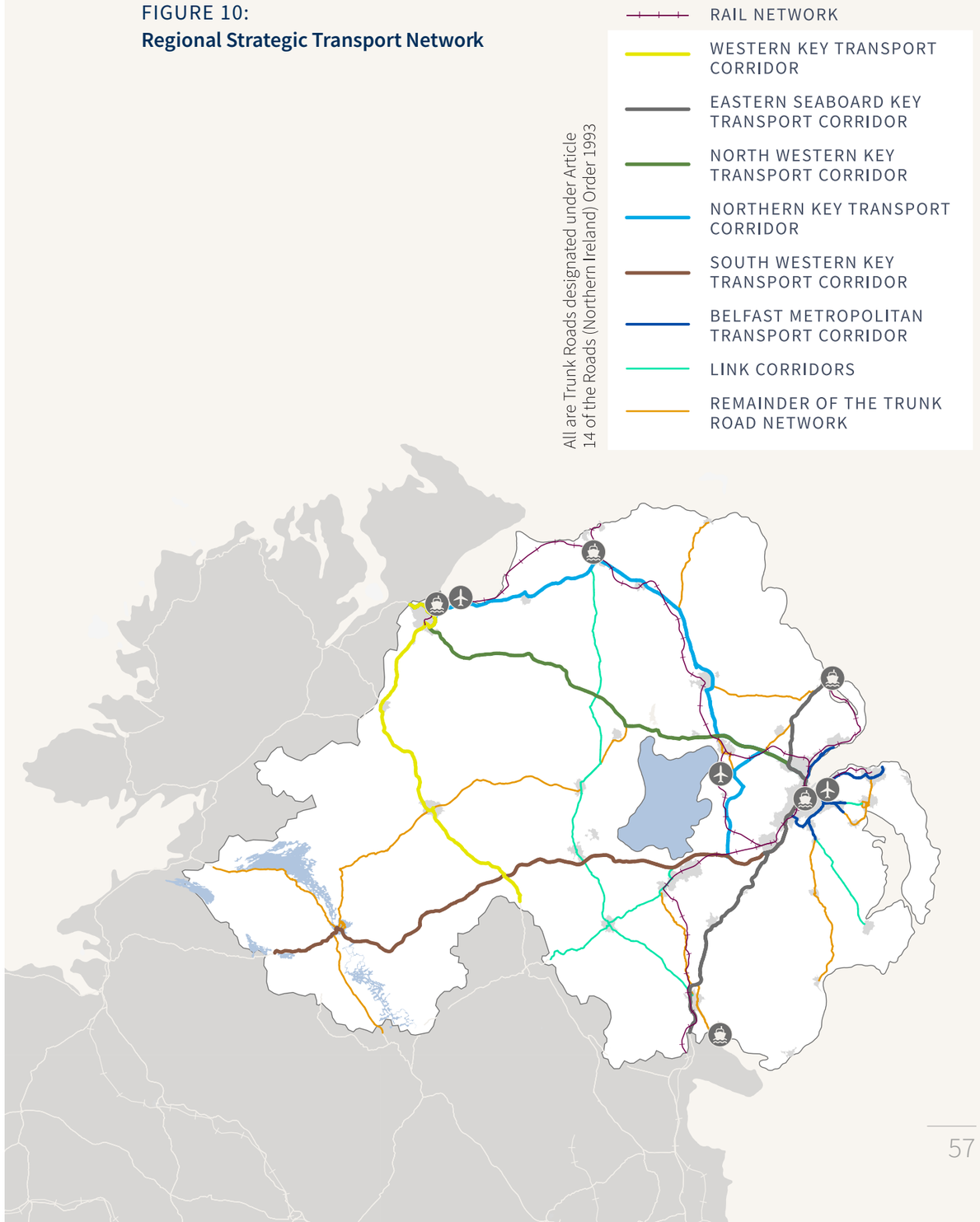
116. The future development of the RSTN will be set out within a new Transport Plan that will run to 2035. This plan will take account of the Executive commitments such as the Flagship and City and Growth Deal transport projects, as well as considering the recommendations of the All-Island Strategic Rail Review. Strengthening economic competitiveness and connectivity across the region, improving the resilience and safety of the network and creating placemaking opportunities are all important considerations.

117. Figure 10 shows the RSTN.

MEASURE CC05

The future development of the RSTN will be outlined within a new Transport Plan for the Strategic Transport Network.

FIGURE 10:
Regional Strategic Transport Network



Belfast Cycle Network, Dublin Road, Belfast

Active Travel

118. Active travel is defined as 'travelling by physically active means such as walking, wheeling, or cycling'. The health benefits of increased physical activity are widely accepted, and this presents an opportunity not only to improve the efficiency of our transport network, but to improve the general health and wellbeing of society.

119. Enabling more people to walk, wheel or cycle for shorter journeys is the most cost-effective way of reducing transport emissions while making our towns and cities more pleasant places to live, work and socialise. Efficient and accessible active travel networks can also help to combat transport inequalities by providing inexpensive travel options for the many people in society who cannot drive or do not own a car.

120. For active travel to become the natural choice for shorter everyday journeys, the associated infrastructure needs to be improved, expanded and well maintained. The cycling network in particular needs considerable investment for it to become a direct and coherent network that feels safe for everyone to use.

121. These network improvements can be complemented by other measures such as education programmes and robust enforcement of traffic regulations.

122. The CCA requires the sectoral plan for transport to set a minimum spend on active travel from the overall transport budgets of 10%. This investment will facilitate accelerated development of the active travel network across NI in the years ahead.

123. The NI wide Active Travel Delivery Plan will support the delivery of this increased investment in active travel. Combined with existing delivery plans, the Belfast Cycling Network and the Strategic Plan for Greenways, the Active Travel Delivery Plan will provide the basis for a high-quality active travel network within and connecting towns and cities.

124. Implementation of the Active Travel Delivery Plan will include the reallocation of road space and rethinking traffic management on some streets to create a safe, connected, coherent network that is easy for everyone to use.

125. When investing in active travel the Department will seek to maximise benefits through continued collaborative working with other departments, councils, schools, community organisations, the third sector, businesses, developers, and private landowners.

126. Active travel measures will be designed to be used by a wide range of people and will consider the needs of the most vulnerable road users first.

MEASURE **CC06**

Increased investment in Active Travel to create a safe, connected, coherent network that is easy for everyone to use.

Active Travel Infrastructure Maintenance

127. Active Travel infrastructure needs to be maintained to an appropriate standard to encourage use. Footways and cycle tracks are generally less expensive to maintain than carriageways, however addressing key issues such as effective street lighting, regular street sweeping, and sustainable management of vegetation will be crucial to ensuring that facilities are well used and offer viable and accessible alternatives to the private car.

Micro-mobility

128. Micro-mobility refers to a range of small, lightweight vehicles operating at speeds typically below 25 km/h (15 mph) and driven by users personally.

129. Personal light electric vehicles such as electric scooters or electric skateboards cannot be used on public roads or footways in NI.

130. While these personal mobility vehicles could contribute to more sustainable travel choices for people, there are also concerns about their safe introduction for the rider and other road users. The Department will continue to monitor emerging trends in this area and any decision regarding their future role as part of the transport system will be subject to broad stakeholder engagement.

Motorbikes

131. Motorcycles and Mopeds are an established form of transport and have a role to play in reducing the impact of traffic, particularly in urban areas where they take up less parking and storage space.

132. The Department will continue to improve motorcycle awareness among other road users and promote safe driving practices for all to improve motorcycle safety.

MEASURE **CC07**

The Department will continue to improve motorcycle awareness among other road users and promote safe driving practices for all to improve motorcycle safety.

Public and Shared Transport

133. Public transport in NI comprises Translink bus, coach and rail services, private bus and coach services, Rathlin and Strangford ferry services, and community transport (that operates as a public membership service). Shared transport options include car and bike share schemes and taxis.

134. Despite public transport being a viable option for many trips, too many people still choose to travel by car, contributing to the congestion in our towns and cities. According to the Travel Survey NI (TSNI) only 3% of the total distance travelled in 2021 was on public transport[2]. This relatively low base means there is an opportunity to deliver significant modal shift to public transport by making it easier to choose public transport over the private car more often.

135. The Department will look to develop and support a public transport system which, in terms of frequency, reliability, comfort and journey time, provides an attractive alternative to the car. The principles outlined earlier in this Strategy regarding the integration and accessibility of the transport network are key components of how we will drive the development of public transport options going forward.

136. However, when developing the public transport system, it is neither affordable nor sustainable to create a public transport system so all-encompassing that every journey requirement will be met by public transport services.

137. To have the most impact in delivering modal shift, the Department must prioritise its funding and focus the provision of services where this will make the most significant difference. In many cases the propensity for people to use public transport is higher in major towns and cities and between large urban centres where population densities offer the most potential to increase the number of journeys taken by public transport.

MEASURE CC08

The Department will look to develop and support a public transport system which provides an attractive and accessible alternative to the car, with provision of services prioritised and focussed on where they will deliver the largest impact in terms of modal shift.

Bus and Coach

138. Having a greater reach, bus and coach services account for the majority of all public transport journeys. These journeys can be increased further through improved and expanded services and infrastructure.

139. These improved and integrated services need to be supported by improved bus priority measures on key corridors. This will reduce journey times and improve the reliability of services to encourage more people out of private cars and onto bus services.

140. In many rural locations it can be challenging to provide the same frequency of services along direct routes to make public transport a realistic alternative to private vehicles. However, it remains important that people in rural communities, particularly those with no or limited access to a private car, can access key services, employment, training and education opportunities by sustainable means. The Department will continue to consider the benefits of providing minimum levels of frequency and services by settlement type and size and learn from initiatives delivered by other jurisdictions to improve rural connectivity.

141. Demand responsive services, aided by technology, may also provide an alternative model of service delivery, offering a more personal, on-demand service, particularly when linked into inter-urban fixed route services.

142. The continuing development of Park and Ride sites on the edge of larger urban areas and along the RSTN will also allow rural dwellers to switch to more sustainable modes of travel for some or most of their journey.

MEASURE CC09

The Department will deliver additional bus priority measures and Park and Ride facilities to encourage more people out of their cars and onto the bus.

Rail Network

143. While limited in size and reach, the rail network provides an attractive transport option for those communities it serves, helping to unlock regeneration and growth opportunities, attracting investment, and supporting sustainable development.

144. The All-Island Strategic Rail Review (AISRR), published in July 2024, examined how the rail network could contribute to the decarbonisation of the island's transport system, promote sustainable connectivity into and between major cities, enhance regional accessibility and support balanced regional development.

145. It includes 32 recommendations which provide an evidence-based framework to inform the future direction of travel for investment in the railways across the island. To implement the recommendations of the AISRR, a range of projects/schemes would be required. Each of these will be subject to appropriate feasibility options, and environmental assessments at project stage.

146. As rail is less suited to supporting lower demand corridors and dispersed communities, future feasibility studies will focus on connections between larger settl ements which have the potential to deliver the greatest modal shift. However, there are opportunities for smaller settlements to link into an extended rail network through enhanced bus provision.

2 Defined for the purposes of the TSNI as "Ulsterbus, Metro, Other Bus, NI Railways and Black Taxi".

MEASURE **CC10**

Future rail feasibility studies will focus on the potential to have most impact on modal shift, unlock regeneration and growth opportunities attracting investment and supporting sustainable development.

Community Transport

147. Community transport, comprising of the Urban Disability Action Transport Scheme (DATS), Rural Dial-a-Lift (DAL) and Shopmobility schemes, plays a vital role in supporting and sustaining local, particularly rural, communities. Its main objective is to address social isolation by providing transport for those who cannot avail of or find it difficult to use public transport. It helps connect communities and ensures that some of the most vulnerable in our society can access essential local goods and services and more actively participate in society.

148. Transport is a key part of many of the strategies being taken forward by various government departments. There is a need to consider how the current services and benefits provided by community transport are maximised, and how its future potential can be realised, funded, and resourced.

149. An evaluation of community transport has been completed and a review will be undertaken to consider community transport provision for the medium to longer term and how the benefits and flexibility of the provision can be captured and more fully used in the wider transport system.

MEASURE **CC11**

The Department will continue to review community transport services to determine how the benefits and flexibility of the provision can be captured and more fully play a role in the wider transport system.

Private Operators

150. Private operators help keep communities connected by delivering local and national public transport services and extending the reach of the public transport network. They are also a key provider of home-to-school transport services and tour services to visitors.

151. By providing services, private operators can contribute to delivering modal shift. They are ideally placed to respond to the needs of communities and offer opportunities to enhance the current provision of public transport services.

152. Closer integration of public and private operators and the development of shared infrastructure and services can help maximise the benefits private operators offer and their role in the public transport system. This can enable new and tailored solutions to local connectivity gaps, which complement and build on existing services and increase the connection within and between communities through additional strategic connectivity networks.

Taxis

153. Taxis provide an important transport service offering door to-door trips and the ability to complete one-off journeys that are difficult to efficiently offer by other modes. Taxis can be of particular importance for people with disabilities and older people who may not have easy access to private cars or public transport. Taxis can also play an important role in Mobility Hubs and Interchanges.

154. Taxis are often essential to the nighttime and evening economy of our towns and cities, supporting the health and vibrancy of Northern Ireland's hospitality sector. Providing a safe means home for people on nights out after public transport services have finished improves the safety of our transport network and communities.

155. Having a range of transport options is also important for our tourism sector with taxis playing an important role, in combination with Public Transport, by connecting our gateways and hospitality assets.

156. The Department will continue to work with taxi providers to support the sector's essential role within the transport system.

MEASURE **CC12**

The Department will continue to work with private operators and taxi providers, recognising their role within the transport system.

Road Network

157. Roads form the main transport arteries across NI and provide the corridors by which pedestrians and cyclists, public transport, freight, and cars move. Roads are the backbone of an effective and sustainable transport system.

158. To deliver the Department's strategic priorities, the development of roads will continue to focus on the Strategic Road Network.

159. Non-strategic road schemes will focus on improving road safety, resilience, decarbonising transport (particularly though modal shift) and placemaking.

Maintaining the Road Network

160. Over the last decade there has been a shortfall in funding for road network structural maintenance. This primarily involves road resurfacing programmes but also includes structural drainage and road surface dressing. It is estimated that the annual funding requirement for these is £195m (2022/23 prices)[3]. In the 2022/23 financial year £127m was invested.

161. This is further exacerbated by limited revenue funding for essential maintenance operations, such as pothole repairs, meaning the Department has had to operate a limited maintenance service policy.

162. As a result, there has been a gradual but steady deterioration in the condition of road assets which then fail to meet the demands and expectations of road users. This can impact journey time reliability, increase carbon emissions, and create risk of injury or damage to people and property. It also reduces overall resilience to adverse events.

163. The Department will set out a new approach to how the road network is maintained; one that focuses resources in a way that balances safety and cost effectiveness while at the same time, improving value for money and level of service. The new approach needs to be data driven and supported by sound engineering judgement, so it delivers intelligent interventions that address the challenge in a meaningful and sustainable manner.

MEASURE **CC13**

The Department will publish a new road maintenance strategy.

3 Inflation adjusted figure from that outlined in the Funding Requirements for Structural Maintenance of the Northern Ireland road network

Parking

164. The SPPS states that a regional strategic objective for transportation and land-use planning is to promote parking policies that will assist in reducing reliance on the private car and help tackle growing congestion.

165. The cost and availability of car parking is a major influence on the mode of transport people choose for their journeys, even for those locations well served by public transport.

166. Within many town and city centres it is recognised that the provision of adequate short-stay public parking facilities, is required to maintain economic vitality and viability and to allow them to compete with out-of-centre developments. Suitable parking is also important for people that have no alternatives to the private car, such as those with specific mobility needs.

167. However, an inappropriate supply of car parking, particularly long-stay commuter parking, can act as an impediment to economic growth and works against the Strategic Priorities for Transport.

168. Reflecting this, parking measures which aim to reduce the number and length of journeys undertaken using a private car and promote sustainable transport will remain a key priority for the Department. This links to the DMF and the reallocation of road space presented earlier in this Strategy.

Inconsiderate Parking

169. Many of our streets were not designed to accommodate today's volumes of car ownership. At some locations with insufficient road width or the absence of driveways, motorists may choose to park on the pavement rather than obstruct the road or impede traffic flow.

170. While parking on the pavement may appear to help keep vehicular traffic moving, it can often create other issues. At some locations, especially where footways are narrower, it forces pedestrians onto the carriageway and into the flow of traffic increasing the risk of collisions between vehicles and pedestrians. This is an issue for everyone but especially impacts those who are blind or partially sighted, those with mobility difficulties, and those pushing prams or buggies.

171. In November 2023, the Department prohibited parking wholly or partly on a footway at a number of specific locations, including bus lanes, the limits of any mandatory cycle lane, and the limits of any mandatory school keep clear areas.

172. The PSNI has powers to enforce against a vehicle found to be causing a general obstruction or found to be obstructing the access to premises.

Residents' Parking Schemes

173. A Residents' Parking scheme is an area where only vehicles with a valid permit or ticket can park during the specified time period the scheme is in operation. The primary aim is to discourage vehicles from outside an area (such as commuters) from parking within residential streets. Residents' Parking Schemes are not suitable for most areas and are usually in response to a unique set of circumstances relating to a specific location.

174. The Department has only been able to introduce one scheme. It is located at Rugby Road/College Park Avenue, Belfast and became operational on 16 April 2018. All other attempts to introduce schemes have been unsuccessful, either because it was not possible to secure sufficient levels of support from residents at the development stage, or due to objections to the scheme during the public consultation.

175. In response to these challenges the Department conducted a review of Residents' Parking Schemes. The results of this review were published in a Residents Parking Review Report in November 2024.

176. Reflecting the recommendations of the Residents Parking Review Report the Department will adopt a strategic approach to parking. This will ensure that new parking policies and measures (including for Residential Parking Schemes) are deliverable, workable and will align with the Strategic Priorities for Transport. The holistic consideration of parking alongside other transport issues in the local transport plans is an important part of this strategic approach.

MEASURE CC14

The Department will ensure that parking policies and measures are deliverable, workable and will align with the Strategic Priorities for Transport.

Enforcement

177. Keeping people safe, including those with additional mobility needs, while maintaining the efficiency of our transport system relies on a high degree of compliance with road traffic laws and The Highway Code.

178. Road rules also support good placemaking and promote sustainable modes of transport, as people feel safe to use active travel options and have confidence in reliable public transport journeys.

179. Knowing and applying the rules is a responsibility shared by all. Only collectively can we reduce road deaths and casualties occurring on our roads and create a more efficient, sustainable and accessible network for everyone.

180. The Department will continue to work with voluntary and community organisations, councils, and relevant agencies such as the PSNI to ensure that rules are enforced robustly, and enforcement capabilities continue to be fit for purpose.

181. The Department will also continue to influence driver behaviour though education and media campaigns so that courteous and rule abiding behaviour is the norm for everyone and the need for enforcement action is reduced.

MEASURE CC15

The Department in conjunction with other organisations will ensure that investment in sustainable transport is protected through appropriate enforcement of road traffic laws, including exploring innovative new methods. This will be supported by public information and education campaigns.

03
Is Safe and Healthy

A transport system by 2050 where no-one is killed or seriously injured.

Road Safety

182. In 2024, 68 people were killed in road collisions. Every death or serious injury on the road network is a tragedy and there remains much work to do to make road transport safer, in particular addressing dangerous road user behaviours (including carelessness/ inattention, driving at excessive speed or being impaired through alcohol/ drugs) which cause approximately 95% of road casualties.

183. Improving road safety underpins all aspects of the Department's work. Improving safety (and perceived safety) is critical to increasing the percentage of journeys made by active travel and public transport. It is also central to good placemaking and for creating an inclusive transport system.

184. The Department has published the Road Safety Strategy for NI to 2030. The Road Safety Strategy has three strategic outcomes:

- Safe People: Our people will be safer on our roads.
- Safe Roads: Our roads will be safer for all.
- Safe Vehicles: Our vehicles will be safe.

185. The Road Safety Strategy sets out a collaborative and partnership approach by providing a framework for government and other road safety stakeholders to establish their own road safety plans, objectives, and interventions to eliminate road crashes which result in serious injuries or fatalities.

186. Beyond 2030 the Department's ambition is that by 2050 fatal accidents should no longer occur on our roads. This ambition is not beyond our reach. New technology will offer many opportunities to improve road safety. However new technologies alone cannot address all the issues and reaching zero fatalities will require the collective effort of the public and public authorities together.

MEASURE SH01

The Department will continue to work with our partners to improve road safety.

20mph Speed Limits

187. To improve road safety and encourage active travel the Department will introduce more 20mph speed limits in appropriate locations. This will be a targeted approach and will take account of factors including road safety; the character of the area; the function of the transport network; the promotion of active travel; and urban place shaping.

188. The Department has already reduced the speed limit to 20mph in many areas such as outside schools, residential areas, and in urban centres. This has made these places safer, particularly for vulnerable road users. A person is five times less likely to be fatally injured if struck by a vehicle at 20mph than at 30mph. It can also make places more attractive to walk and cycle.

189. The imposition of any new speed restriction, or amendment to an existing speed restriction, requires a Speed Limit Order to be made. As part of the statutory process the Department will seek the views of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), local communities and other interested groups before changing the speed limit.

MEASURE **SH02**

The Department will introduce more 20mph zones in appropriate locations.

Railway Safety

190. Railway safety is an issue which affects everyone who interacts with the rail system, whether that is as a passenger, someone who works on the railway, or as a member of the public who crosses a level crossing when travelling.

191. The Department, as the Rail Safety Authority, monitors safety performance on the rail network and publishes an annual safety performance report and a report of performance against Common Safety Indicators (CSIs). In comparison to GB, Ireland and other EU countries the NI rail network is among the safest in Europe across most CSIs.

192. The Department, in its rail safety regulatory role works closely with Translink, the wider rail sector and other health and safety partners, to bring about improvements in railway safety. Each year, the Department conducts audits and inspections of mainline railway operators to ensure their safety management systems are adequately managing risks on the rail network.

193. There are emerging challenges for railway safety as the Department supports investment in new and upgraded railway infrastructure and rolling stock - partly as a result of maintaining an aging network, and partly as a result of efforts to encourage modal shift and decarbonisation of our transport system. These challenges will bring new people into contact with our railway network, primarily as passengers but also as employees working on the railway.

194. The Department will continue to work with partner organisations to undertake work to improve our approach to railway safety, including on a cross-border basis, and has established the NI Rail Safety & Technical Standards Group to engage with industry on safety and standards issues.

MEASURE **SH03**

The Department will continue to work in partnership with other public authorities and stakeholders to improve railway safety.

Improving Air Quality

195. Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK, as long-term exposure to air pollution can cause chronic conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases as well as lung cancer, leading to reduced life expectancy.

196. Road transport is responsible for a range of pollutant emissions, those of greatest concern are nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. In 2022, road transport contributed 30% of the UKs Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) emissions. In terms of human exposure it is the location of these emissions – at ground level, often close to homes, schools and shops in urban areas that make their health impacts greater than those from other sources such as energy and industry.

197. NI has 17 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) declared because of NO2 emissions from road traffic. These primarily occur in urban areas experiencing high volumes of traffic.

198. Particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) arises as a by-product of the combustion of petrol and diesel and from physical processes, such as brake pad, tyre, and road surface wear. Although no objectives for particulate matter are exceeded in NI, there is still a need to address what levels there are, as there is 'no safe level'.

199. For AQMAs that have transport related issues the Department works with local councils as they prepare and implement their Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs). These AQAPs contain actions that the Department, alongside other 'Competent Authorities' are taking to address air quality issues.

MEASURE **SH04**

The Department will continue to work in partnership with councils and DAERA in the preparation and implementation of AQAPs and the Clean Air Strategy for NI.

Ariel view of A1

04

Supports Green Growth

A transport system that provides businesses with efficient and reliable connections, particularly to our gateways and creates economic opportunities though sustainable investment, network management and better places.

Transport and the Green Economy

200. Companies in NI are looking towards delivering innovative sustainable growth that creates both commercial and societal value while lowering their carbon impact. These companies can deliver significant impacts on clean energy and low carbon technology. Their expertise and passion for innovation and engineering will create opportunities to deliver lasting generational transformation in NI.

201. The NI Executive's Energy Strategy will support the growth of a new skills base for a low carbon economy.

202. The Department will continue to assist in reducing the carbon associated with its operational activities and drive sustainable economic growth through its transport and workplace policies.

203. Companies across the public, private and voluntary sectors can also play a crucial role in promoting workforce policies that reduce the carbon impact of travel, for example, through working from home policies and travel incentives that promote active and sustainable travel options.

204. The Department will also continue to work with other authorities in NI, the UK and Ireland to develop green growth policies and investment opportunities.

Freight Movements and Economic Growth

205. Almost all of NI's freight is moved by road. This will not change significantly in the Strategy period. Businesses and consumers rely on efficient, reliable, safe, and resilient connections between our towns and cities and to our gateways to Ireland, Britain, and the rest of the world.

206. Providing a more regionally balanced RSTN will support many of our indigenous businesses with better linkages to our gateways and will provide enhanced opportunities to attract foreign direct investment. Being able to tap into every part of NI is crucial for us to reach our full potential by providing greater accessibility, improved safety and increased inclusion.

207. Ensuring the transport system (and particularly the RSTN) is safe, well maintained and is operating efficiently is central to supporting the freight sector and economic growth. Further improvements to the RSTN will provide freight movements with efficiency savings and better journey time reliability.

208. There is currently no rail freight in NI. Rail transport can offer key advantages for longer distances, particularly across the island of Ireland, and regional freight movements. Future rail feasibility studies will, where appropriate, explore opportunities to develop rail freight.

209. Last mile freight movement is the final stage of a product's journey. It is typically the movement of a single or small number of packages from a delivery warehouse to a customer's home or business, usually as part of a larger consignment of other small packages being delivered to multiple locations. The majority of these movements are conducted by Light Good Vehicles (LGVs) rather than HGVs.

210. In addition to switching fuel of LGVs, a priority for last mile freight movements is to reduce their number in our towns and cities, and reducing the time they spend there. Having appropriate loading and servicing spaces can improve safety and reduce disruption to other travellers (including bus lanes, cycleways and pavements). Appropriate provision of loading and servicing spaces can also reduce the amount of time freight vehicles need to spend finding an appropriate location to load/unload their goods, preventing congestion at pinch points and reducing emissions.

211. Loading and servicing plans for urban centres can reduce the adverse impacts from goods vehicles while supporting logistic operations. The Department will continue to monitor freight movements within urban centres and will introduce Loading and Servicing Plans with key stakeholders where this is considered beneficial.

212. The improvement of active travel infrastructure and the encouragement of cycle freight could also reduce LGV traffic in larger urban areas. Improving the efficiency of last mile freight movements though freight consolidation will also be encouraged.

MEASURE **GG01**

Through the maintenance and development of the RSTN, the Department will support the efficient movement of freight across NI and to gateways.

MEASURE **GG02**

The Department will continue to monitor freight and logistics operations in urban areas to support efficient operations and reduce adverse impacts.

Gateways: Ports and Airports

213. NI is reliant on our gateways for the import of essential goods and for access to key export markets and destinations for travellers. Safe and efficient access is essential for the functioning of our ports and airports.

214. As gateways to international trade and supply chains, it is vital that our ports and airports are appropriately equipped to decarbonise their operations. Our ports and airports have already started to take steps to decarbonise with ZEVs and zero-emission energy sources now widely used.

215. As next generation technologies and fuels become available our Gateways will need to provide appropriate infrastructure to facilitate the move away from fossil fuel energy. This is needed to meet commitments in the CCA and to allow our Gateways to attract trade and investment from industries that require low carbon infrastructure to support their own climate objectives and operational needs.

216. Aviation and maritime shipping sectors are inherently global in nature, and this makes them some of the most challenging modes of transport to decarbonise. Given their global nature, the UK Government is leading in decarbonisation through the Jet Zero strategy: delivering net zero aviation by 2050 and Maritime 2050: navigating the future.

MEASURE **GG03**

The Department will continue to work with air and seaport operators and other public authorities, such as the Department for the Economy and UK Government, to ensure our Gateways have the necessary support and legislative basis to sustainably grow their operations, meet climate change commitments and other regulatory requirements.

Sustainability through Innovation

217. Technology has a significant role in improving the efficiency, accessibility and sustainability of the transport system.

Intelligent Transport Systems

218. The Department already uses Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) to process data from sources such as sensors, real-time data on traffic flow, weather conditions, and other factors that can impact the transport system. This is used to inform decisions regarding routing, traffic management, and other operations.

219. As more data and computing power becomes available the Department will integrate more ITS into the management of the transport system. This will include the possibility of utilising ITS to promote more sustainable forms of travel - for example providing public transport and active travel priority on routes at certain times.

220. Real time decision-making in public transport linking to ITS can also help identify and predict surges in road usage, for example at sporting or cultural events; or adapting routes to deal with blockages caused by roadworks. Other advancements in public transport such as integrated ticketing and Mobility as a service will make it easier to transfer between public transport services.

Connected & Autonomous Vehicles

221. Connected and autonomous vehicles are an emerging and potentially significant change to road transport. The term connected vehicles refers to vehicles that can communicate with each other; with infrastructure; and with the wider system of other road users and networks through data sharing.

222. Autonomous vehicles use automated driver-assistance systems such as Radar/LiDAR, ultrasound, and in-vehicle cameras, along with other on-board and roadside sensors and other state-of-the-art technologies to deliver self-driving vehicles capable of operating without any driver input.

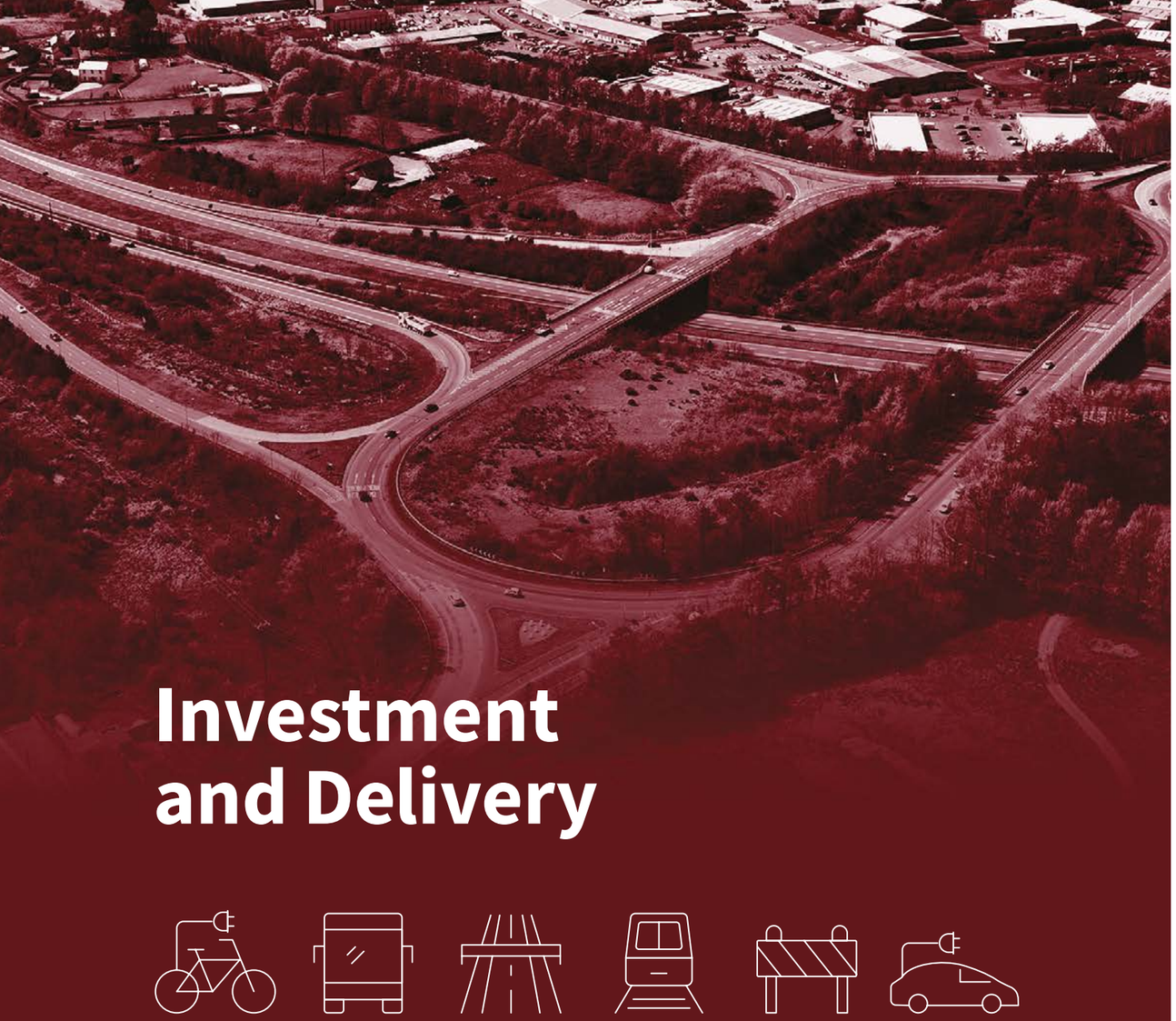
223. The Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (a joint unit of the Department for Transport and the Department for Business & Trade) is leading on the development of policy, safety standards and industry development of autonomous vehicles for the UK Government.

224. Led by Belfast Harbour, the Harlander project will see the deployment of the UKs first fully driverless transport system. The Harlander will provide a two-vehicle passenger shuttle service within the Belfast Harbour estate, providing sustainable last-mile connectivity from the Titanic Quarter railway station to Thompson Dock in Queen's Island. This is driving innovation in this area and developing local skills and knowledge that will have global application.

MEASURE: **GG04**

The Department will continue to consider the role of technological innovation in improving the efficiency, safety, and sustainability of the transport system.

Derry~Londonderry Port and Harbour



Investment and Delivery

Investment Priorities

Maintenance

225. NI has a legacy of underinvestment with the spend on transport services the lowest spend per head of population of all the UK Nations, as shown in Figure 11. Likewise, investment in Ireland has also been higher. This has resulted in a back log in maintenance over the past decade.

226. The Department commissioned Mr Jim Barton, a UK Highway expert, to undertake an Independent Review into the Funding Requirements for Structural Maintenance of the Northern Ireland road network. The report, published in 2019 highlighted the funding disparity between NI and the GB nations. The report found that NI road resurfacing programmes over the past decade have amounted to less than two-thirds of the level of funding necessary and had resulted in a maintenance backlog of more than £1.2Bn (in 2019 prices). Due to recent years inflationary pressures, the cost to replace the service potential of the road network will have increased; accordingly, failure to keep pace with minimum investment will also mean that whilst repairs and refiling are happening, the backlog is not being addressed, and in fact is increasing, resulting in a noticeable deterioration of the roads asset.

227. The rail network must be maintained to a high standard of safety in compliance with the rail safety regulatory framework. A backlog in historic investment means increased funding will be required over the period of this strategy to ensure the railway can operate efficiently and adhere to statutory standards. Maintaining standards and customer satisfaction is also important to ensure the railways continue to offer an attractive form of transport, particularly compared to car travel.

FIGURE 11: **UK identifiable expenditure on services by function (Transport), country and region, per head, 2008-2022**

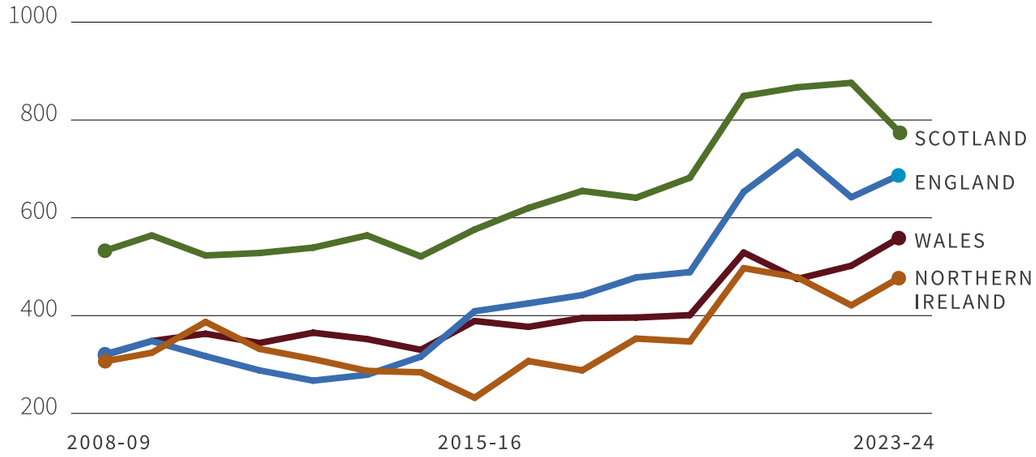
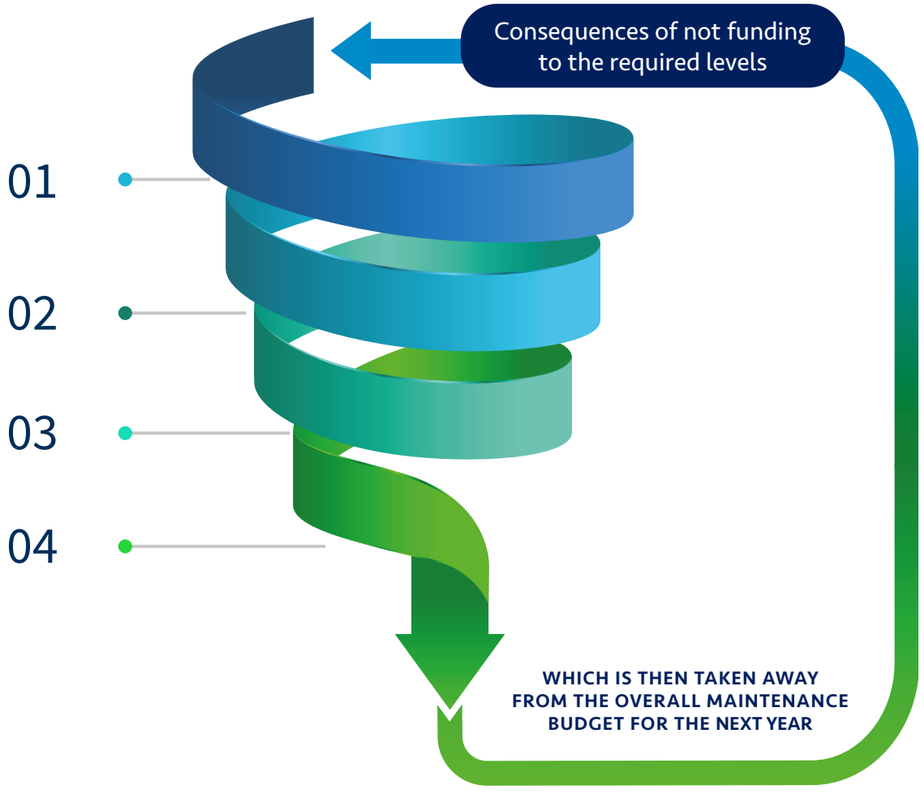


FIGURE 12: **Consequences of not funding infrastructure to required levels**



01 Not funding our infrastructure to the required level means that maintenance is delayed or reduced in scale.

02 Infrastructure becomes more unreliable and can expose the public to greater health and safety risks or a reduction in services and requires more short term repairs.

03 These repairs often take longer to complete, are more expensive or occur more regularly leading to more delays and disruption or closures.

04 The infrastructure is then in place for longer than it is designed for and when required to be replaced costs more to undertake.

228. Figure 12 shows the downward spiral and implications caused by underinvestment in maintenance. Put simply, it is better value to maintain the asset well and in a timely fashion to avoid the asset deteriorating more quickly, which results in more costly and complex interventions in the future.

229. For these reasons, it is important that existing transport assets are efficiently maintained before investing in new assets. Maintenance costs are generally recurrent annual costs.

230. The existing transport network is the platform on which society functions; its quality and utility are implied assumption in all public services. A failure to safeguard its condition and address the deterioration experienced over the past ten years is likely to see some parts of the network being rendered unusable. Addressing maintenance backlogs is key to managing risks to public safety and ensuring that the base level assumption of connectivity for citizens and businesses is sustained.

Existing Scheme Commitments

231. While this is a new Strategy, there are a number of Ministerial priorities, such as the Flagship and the City and Growth Deals Transport Projects, which will need to be built into modelling and financial assumptions. Specific allocations for Flagship or City and Growth Deals is ringfenced when allocated to the Department so cannot be spent on other projects.

Delivering our Transport Objectives

232. Finite budgets create the need to prioritise not only between the maintenance of our transport assets and the delivery of new projects but which of these new projects will be delivered and when. Managing these competing needs will require difficult decisions to be made.

233. Delivering infrastructure programmes and services doesn't only require financial investment; it also needs a talented and capable workforce. Recruitment and retention difficulties mean that the part of the Department responsible for managing the road network currently has a vacancy rate of approximately 27%. Accordingly, we are currently undertaking a review of our operating model to seek to ensure we have sufficient capability and capacity to competently, safely and sustainably deliver our objectives in the future.

234. Given the need to meet stretching emissions targets in relatively short timescales, increased modelling and data capability within the Department will help us to better demonstrate how individual projects will impact against this Strategy's outcomes.

235. Deliverability will also be an important factor in determining relative priorities.

Public Transport Assets

236. The Department invests both significant capital and revenue funding in Public Transport.

237. In 2023-2024 financial year the Department funded Translink with £167.7m of revenue support as well as £275.4m in capital support in the delivery of our public transport system.

238. There will continue to be a need for ongoing fleet renewal programmes. In recent years bus fleet renewals has focussed on replacing diesel vehicles with electric vehicles, with much of the Metro fleet in Belfast and Derry/ Londonderry having been replaced.

239. An electric bus is currently around 60% more expensive than a Euro 6 compliant diesel bus. Affordability and the most effective means to reduce the carbon emissions from transport will need to be considered before embarking on full replacement of all Translink buses and coaches with zero and low emission alternatives.

240. Investment decisions will give weight to urban and inter-urban bus service improvements that have the potential to increase accessibility and help induce significant modal shift.

241. Longer term rail proposals including the expansion and electrification proposals presented in the All-Island Strategic Rail Review, published in July 2023, will be considered in more detailed feasibility assessments in this period to 2035. Affordability will mean the option to procure and construct these projects is unlikely before 2035 without significant additional transport funding being made available and/or a change to Executive transport priorities.

Public Transport Revenue Subsidies

242. The Department provides revenue funded subsidies to Translink by two streams. One is through a Public Service Agreement (PSA) and the other is through Concessionary Fares.

243. Through the PSA, the Department includes a commitment that funding should be maintained at such a level to ensure that the public service obligation activities performed by Translink enable it to maintain its financial viability over the life of the Corporate Plan. This will continue.

244. Through the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme the Department promotes accessible public transport for those most at risk of social exclusion by providing free and half fare public transport at all times of the day for those aged over 60 or with a qualifying disability. The Scheme also covers half price fares for children and young people.

245. Following a public consultation on proposed changes to the eligibility criteria for the Scheme in 2023, it was decided to retain the current concessions under the Scheme, including maintaining age eligibility at 60. To help protect the Scheme and manage overall costs, a fee for those applying for, renewing or replacing their concession pass will be introduced.

246. The eligibility criteria for the Scheme will remain under review to ensure the Scheme can continue to be provided for those most in need. This will include looking for opportunities to increase the concession available to those with qualifying disabilities, or extending the eligibility criteria for the Scheme, if the financial position allows.

Alternative Funding Opportunities

247. Given the pressures on the transport budget the Department will explore alternative forms of funding for the maintenance and improvement of the transport system.

248. This could involve consideration of areas such as road user charging (tolls), congestion charging, greater partnership working and shared prioritisation with delivery partners and a broad review of the fees and charges managed by the Department in the delivery of its transport functions. The Department will also continue to make effective use of developer contributions to improve transport in line with the provisions in the SPPS.

Monitoring and Delivery

249. The delivery of this Strategy will be achieved through a combination of new and existing transport programmes and decision-making processes. This will see both immediate and incremental change. For example, creating behavioural changes will require immediate action combined with long-term planning. This is to ensure change becomes embedded and the transport system is future proofed for societal needs and demands.

250. This Strategy will be accompanied by a series of Delivery Frameworks that will outline the progress towards the Strategic Priorities for Transport. These Delivery Frameworks will link to Carbon Budget periods. The first Delivery Framework will be published alongside the adopted Strategy and will set out the actions and measures that are expected to be taken forward in the period to 2027. Subsequent Delivery Frameworks will review the effectiveness of the actions taken in the previous period so that positive change can be reinforced, and changes made where necessary. The Delivery Framework will be accompanied by monitoring indicators following the principles of evidence-based decision making as set out earlier in this Strategy.

251. The content of the Delivery Frameworks will be closely linked to the preparation, delivery and outworking of the Department's key transport workstreams such as the CCA Transport Sectoral Plan, Transport Plans, Active Travel Delivery Plan and the Road Safety Strategy. As these programmes are developed further, they may provide the delivery reporting of this Strategy. This will ensure that action is focused in the correct areas and duplication of effort is avoided.

252. Delivery of this Strategy will also be dependent on the actions of key transport partners and stakeholders, the choices of individuals and wider changes in the transportation (such as the uptake in low and zero emission vehicles and technological advancements in transport). Reflecting this, the Delivery Frameworks will take account of wider transport developments such as the preparation and adoption of the councils LDPs, changes in other related UK and NI government policies and changes in the public's travel behaviours.

Impact Screening and Assessments

253. Throughout the delivery phases, individual projects will be appropriately screened in line with the Department's Equality Scheme.

254. Other assessments, such as Strategic/ Environmental Impact Assessments, will be undertaken, where appropriate.

Withdrawn Documents

255. Upon adoption of this Strategy the following documents will be withdrawn:

- Moving Forward: Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement.
- The Regional Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012.
- Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future - A New Approach to Regional Transportation.
- Planning for the Future of Transport – Time for Change.

Abbreviations List

ABC SRTP	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Sub-Regional Transport Plan
AISRR	All-Island Strategic Rail Review
AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
CCA	Climate Change Act
CCG SRTP	Causeway Coast and Glens Sub-Regional Transport Plan
CO2	Carbon Dioxide
CSI	Common Safety Indicator
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DAL	Dial-a-Lift
DATS	Disability Action Transport Scheme
DMF	Demand Management Framework
ETP	Eastern Transport Plan
EU	European Union
EV	Electric Vehicle
FO SRTP	Fermanagh and Omagh Sub-Regional Transport Plan
GB	Great Britain
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
ICE	Internal Combustion Engine
IMTAC	Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee
ITS	Intelligent Transport Systems
km/h	kilometres per hour
KTC	Key Transport Corridor
LDP	Local Development Plan
LEV	Low Emission Vehicle
LGV	Light Goods Vehicle
LTP	Local Transport Plan
mph	miles per hour
MU SRTP	Mid Ulster Sub-Regional Transport Plan
NI	Northern Ireland
NMD SRTP	Newry, Mourne and Down Sub-Regional Transport Plan
NO2	Nitrogen Dioxide
NWTP	North-West Transport Plan
PM	Particulate Matter
PMF	Place and Movement Framework
PSA	Public Service Agreement
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
RSTN	Regional Strategic Transport Network
SPPS	Strategic Planning Policy Statement
TEM	Transport Emissions Model
TSNI	Travel Survey Northern Ireland
UK	United Kingdom
ZEV	Zero Emission Vehicle

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