

Introductory Statement from Anne Graham, Chief Executive, National Transport Authority

Thank you for the invitation to attend. I understand that the Committee wishes to focus upon two areas in particular, the vision for public transport and the subvention of public transport services.

Before dealing with the specific areas of focus, I would like to set the context by providing a brief overview of the remit of the Authority.

Remit of the Authority

The remit of the National Transport Authority is to regulate and develop the provision of integrated public transport services (bus, rail, light rail and taxi) by public and private operators in the State, to secure the development and implementation of an integrated transport system within the Greater Dublin Area, and to contribute to the effective integration of transport and land use planning across the State.

In addition to its statutory responsibilities, the Authority has various arrangements with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to discharge functions on its behalf. This includes the assignment of responsibility to the Authority for integrated local and rural transport, including provision of the Rural Transport Programme.

The vision of the National Transport Authority, as set out in our Statement of Strategy, is a “Greater share of high quality accessible sustainable public transport being used by all”. This forms the basis of all the work that the Authority undertakes.

A vision for public transport

The Authority has a statutory function to produce a transport strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, the area which includes the four Dublin counties, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow. The GDA Transport Strategy 2016-2035 was approved by the Minister earlier this year. It sets out how the vision for greater use of sustainable transport could be delivered by 2035 allowing also for a 29% increase in transport demand over that period.

The strategy outlines the heavy and light rail network, the core bus network as well as a supporting cycling network and other demand management measures that are necessary to ensure that 55% of the trips to work in 2035 are made by sustainable modes.

While the Authority has no statutory function to provide strategic plans outside the GDA, the Authority has developed a suite of transport models which would allow us to do so. The Authority has worked with Galway City Council on the Galway Transport Strategy and is actively engaged with the other regional city authorities in planning for sustainable transport.

Responsibilities of the Authority with regard to public bus services provision

The Authority is responsible for securing the provision of public bus services through two specified mechanisms:

- public service contracts, where services would not otherwise be provided on a commercial basis, and
- the licensing of public bus services, which are operated on a commercial basis.

Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann are contracted to the Authority to provide public transport services. The Authority is also contracted with TII to Transdev Ireland Ltd. for the provision of Luas services and there are a number of bus services provided under contract to the Authority by other private operators across the state.

The Authority has been working to improve public transport since its establishment supported by Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann.

The Authority commenced a series of network reviews across all of Bus Éireann's services. Starting with the regional cities, a number of network changes were made which resulted in increased passenger numbers at a time of declining passenger numbers on other services. Some results are outlined in the table below:

Table 1: Growth in public transport passengers in regional cities

	<i>Cork</i>		<i>Galway</i>		<i>Limerick</i>		<i>Waterford</i>	
	<i>2013</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2015</i>
<i>Passengers</i>	<i>10.25</i>	<i>11.70</i>	<i>3.82</i>	<i>4.00</i>	<i>2.76</i>	<i>2.84</i>	<i>0.83</i>	<i>0.85</i>
<i>(m)</i>		<i>(+14.1%)</i>		<i>(+4.7%)</i>		<i>(+2.9%)</i>		<i>(+2.4%)</i>

Bus Éireann's stage carriage service between rural towns is still in the process of being restructured on a county by county basis. South Kerry has had an amended network of services implemented, some revisions have been implemented in Co. Mayo and more are scheduled by end 2016. Reconfigurations of the network of services on the M/N2 corridor approach to Dublin have been implemented, and those planned for the M3 will follow before the end of 2016.

Rural Transport Programme – “Local Link”

The objective of the Rural Transport Programme is to provide a good quality nationwide community based public transport system in rural Ireland which responds to local needs. In 2016, funding of €13.7 million was provided through the Authority for the programme which represented a 16% increase in the annual funding to the programme. With the benefit of this local collaboration, we

expect to make considerable progress, throughout 2016, on refining, and expanding where appropriate, the operation of local transport services, in addition to ensuring the optimal level of integration with the other public transport services.

At present there are 41 new rural transport services being examined by the Authority across the state with a number of Local Link offices. The planned services also include new town services in Cavan, Ennis, Mullingar, Kilkenny and Letterkenny.

With the additional funding, the Authority has been able to provide 13 additional services in Kerry, Wexford, Leitrim, Roscommon ensuring better connections into and between local towns to key destinations such as shops, hospitals and community facilities.

The Authority is developing a three-year strategy for the development of rural transport which sees further expansion in the services and further integration with HSE transport services subject to funding being received.

Other integration measures

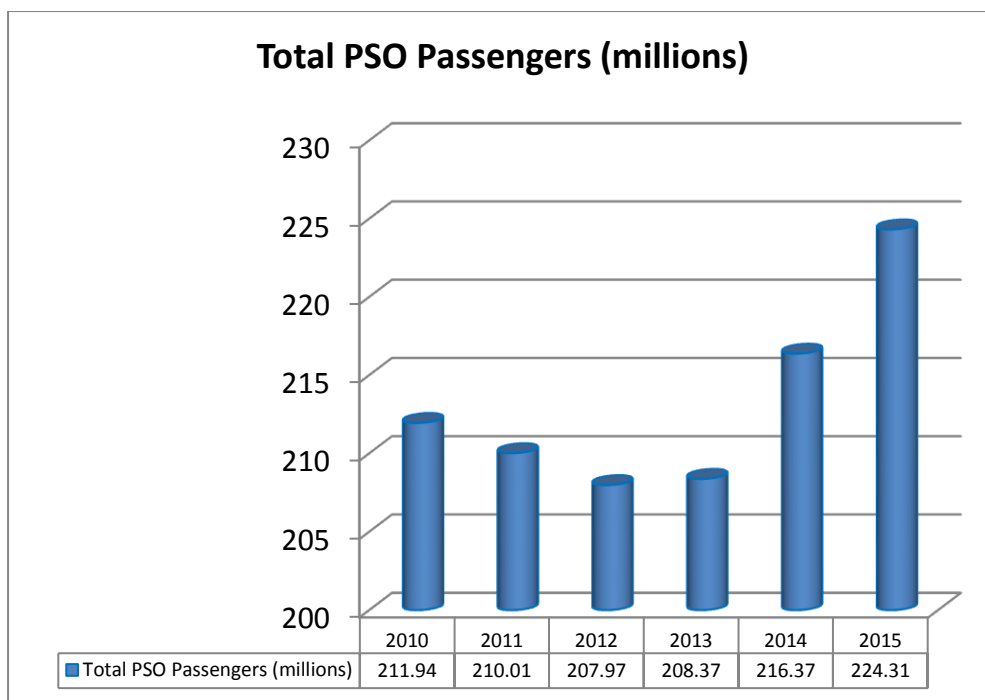
The Authority is working to simplify the fares structure for bus and rail services and to offer integrated fare products across the state. The introduction of the Leap card has greatly facilitated such integration. Our vision for fares is for a further simplified, better value fares offer for the public transport customer. The Authority is currently examining what the next generation of smart ticketing might be for Ireland.

The Authority has had a multi-modal national journey planner in operation for over 4 years. This allows anyone to plan their journeys to and from any location in Ireland by public transport. It has been continually improved by our system developers and a new version of the Journey Planner App has just been launched in the App Stores.

Real time passenger information has greatly enhanced the experience of the public transport customer and the Authority would like to expand on that system by erecting more signs and by developing real time travel alerts for the customer as they travel.

Growth in Travel

The first real return to growth in passenger numbers across all public transport services occurred in 2014. The demand for public transport services continued to grow in 2015 as illustrated below:



To date in 2016, passenger numbers continue to grow with an estimated outturn growth of between 5% and 8% expected by the end of the year.

Demand for travel is now on the increase and patronage on public transport is growing. This trend of increased overall demand is expected to continue and accelerate with further economic recovery and population growth envisaged over the next 5 years.

Public transport service provision must anticipate this growth and additional service provision should occur in a timely manner to influence mode choice associated with the increase levels of demand, particularly arising from new developments and new employment opportunities. This will assist in maximising public transport market share and national policy aims to increase mode share for sustainable travel.

It is unlikely that all such demands can be met within existing service provision and capacity, particularly within the City and urban networks where population growth will be highest, and where existing peak capacity is already well used.

The Authority will continue to work to improve existing public transport services and provide additional services to meet the growing demand within the budget that it receives.

That concludes my introductory presentation. I trust that I can answer any queries that arise.