

NTA Responses to Parliamentary Questions Report – Q4 2024

Bulletin 3 – 2024

Prepared by the Public Affairs Unit



Introduction

This bulletin provides a report of the Parliamentary Question (PQ) responses issued by the NTA to members of Dáil Éireann during the relevant time period. The bulletin will be published on the NTA website on a quarterly basis.

If you have any queries in respect of the report you can contact the Public Affairs Unit via email at info@nationaltransport.ie.

The NTA issued responses to 122 Parliamentary Questions in quarter 4 of 2024.

The NTA received 129 Parliamentary Questions in quarter 4 of 2024.

PQ Date	PQ Number	Subject	Description	Response	Representative Name
21/03/2024	93	PQ Referred: 13255/24, for answer 21/03/2024, Oral from - Pauline Tully	<p>Dail Question No: 93 To ask the Minister for Transport if transport policy is based on the principles of universal design; if he is considering legislation that mandates national mandatory minimum accessibility standards for public transport; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. From a policy perspective, Goal 7 'Infrastructure Design', of the Sustainable Mobility Policy aims to support enhanced permeability and ensure that the universal design principle and Hierarchy of Road Users model is used to inform future investment decisions to reduce inequalities, support a whole of journey approach, and prioritise sustainable mobility. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for the provision of public transport infrastructure as well as the provision of an accessible, integrated public transport system for all users. The NTA works with the relevant public transport companies, as appropriate. Noting the NTA's responsibility regarding accessibility standards for public transport services and infrastructure, I have referred the Deputy's questions to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I am writing to you concerning the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 93 of 21 March last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. Due to an administrative oversight, we neglected to issue a response before now. My sincere apologies for the delay in responding.</p> <p>Public Transport and its Infrastructure is not limited to one standard or regulation as it is made up of many different components such as standards for vehicles, buildings, stations and the journey from a person's house to the bus stop or rail station through the built environment.</p> <p>For the Building of Rail infrastructure and stations, Irish Rail must comply with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Standards for Interoperability for People with Reduced Mobility (TSI PRM) which are mandated on all mainline railways across the European Union. <p>For the Building or Expansion of Buildings such as stations, the relevant entity such as Irish Rail or Bus Éireann must ensure that they comply with Building Regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part M: Access and Use of the Building Regulations. <p>For new bus and coach fleet purchased by the NTA, they must comply with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Economic Commission for Europe Regulation 107. <p>There was no European (or Irish) Regulations for the general outdoor Built Environment, for accessibility until recently when the National Standards Association of Ireland (NSAI) adopted the European suite of Standards in 2021 for all authorities to comply with.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IS EN:17210 (Functional Requirements) and S.R. CEN/TR 17621:2021 (Technical Requirements) Accessibility and Usability of the Built Environment are for the design, construction, refurbishment, adaption and maintenance of the built environment including outdoor pedestrian and urban areas. <p>In its Grant Allocation Letters to Local Authorities, the NTA the necessity for all grantees to comply with the Disability Act 2005 and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in consulting with disability groups for their designs. Local Authorities are also advised that all infrastructure funded through the Active Travel Grant must be fully accessible for all. In addition, they are also advised to follow the guidelines given by the National Disability Authority in "Participation Matters: Guidelines for implementing the obligation to meaningfully engage with disabled</p>	Pauline Tully, T.D

people.
NDA Participation Matters Guidelines on implementing the obligation to meaningfully engage with disabled people in public decision making.

The NTA Active Travel Team has completed producing an Equality Guidance Document for Local Authorities to follow in respect of NTA funded schemes. It states that the designers should, among other documents, refer to the

- Irish Standards IS EN:17210 (Functional Requirements) and S.R. CEN/TR 17621:2021 (Technical Requirements) Accessibility and Usability of the Built Environment; and
- National Disability Authority's document "Universal Design – Building for Everyone".

I trust that the above information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Creegan,
Deputy Chief Executive.

11/06/2024	121	<p>PQ Referred: 24800/24, for answer 11/06/2024, Written from - Michael Healy-Rae</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 121</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if there are plans to reintroduce the issuing of new taxi licences for sale for saloon cars; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) sector, including SPSV licensing, is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA) under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Act 2013 and 2016. I have no role in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV sector.</p> <p>In June 2010, the NTA introduced S.I. No. 250 of 2010 -Taxi Regulation Act 2003 (Grant of Taxi Licences) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 to only issue new taxi and hackney licences for wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys.</p> <p>Under the National Sustainable Mobility Policy: Action Plan 2022 – 2025, the NTA is tasked with increasing the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in the SPSV fleet (taxis, hackneys and limousines) from the number in place at the end of 2021 by 25%, by the end of 2025. To support the wider availability of WAVs, the Department has funded the WAV grant scheme annually since 2014, to provide financial support towards the acquisition or conversion of suitable vehicles to operate as WAVs in the SPSV fleet. As of 30 April 2024, the WAV penetration of the SPSV fleet (taxis, hackneys, and limousines) is 19.35%, while the percentage of wheelchair accessible taxis in the taxi fleet is 28.67%.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibilities in the matter, I have referred your question to the NTA for attention. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 121 of 11 June last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>It should be noted that saloon taxi and hackneys have not been licenced since 2010, following the introduction of regulations in June 2010, the purpose of which was to increase the penetration of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) in the SPSV fleet nationwide (taxis, hackneys and limousines). Furthermore, under the National Sustainable Mobility Policy: Action Plan 2022 – 2025, the NTA is tasked with increasing the number of WAVs in the SPSV fleet from the number in place at the end of 2021 by 25% by the end of 2025. As at 01 June 2024, there were 3,939 WAVs in the fleet representing 19.53% of licenced SPSVs in the fleet at that date. Whilst there are no plans to introduce SPSV licences for saloon cars, the NTA continues to issue new vehicle licences for wheelchair accessible taxis, wheelchair accessible hackneys, local area hackneys and limousines. The application requirements for vehicle licences for each of the above vehicle type can be found here and the NTA has made available on its website helpful guides to assist applicants with the licensing process; a list of the available guides is available here including a guide for local area hackney licences.</p> <p>New entrants to the SPSV industry that hold an SPSV Driver licence can also rent a licensed vehicle as an alternative to applying for their own SPSV licence. The majority of respondents to a driver survey carried out in October 2022 reported to pay between €150 - €200 per week for renting a licensed SPSV, the full report on this survey can be found here. Whilst each SPSV driver can decide their own business strategy within the regulatory framework, it should be noted that operating a second-hand wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) under a new SPSV Licence is currently the most economical route for new entrants. A second-hand WAV up to 6 years of age can be licensed and then operated until it reaches 15 years from the date of first registration. Should SPSV drivers require financial support, the Microenterprise Loan Fund provides vital support by filling the lending gap in the market by lending to businesses that cannot obtain loans from other commercial lenders. Further information on the range of services offered by Microfinance Ireland is available here. Information on the different routes to operating in the SPSV industry can be found in Chapter 9 of the NTA Official Manual for Operating in the SPSV Industry and NTA recommends all new entrants study this section thoroughly, to assess what route is most economical and appropriate for them.</p> <p>The NTA publishes statistics each month on its website, nationaltransport.ie and the latest statistics can be found here - SPSV (vehicle) licences and driver licences.</p>	Michael Healy-Rae, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	---	-------------------------

I trust that the above is of assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne Graham
Chief Executive

23/08/2024	249	<p>PQ Referred: 32784/24, for answer 23/07/2024, Written from - Anne Rabbitte</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 249</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the number of public transport services established from 2020 to 2024 to date in County Galway; the funding required to enable delivery of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Minister,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 179 of 21 May last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the lengthy delay in responding.</p> <p>As part of the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan, the Authority plans to provide a new service between Tuam and Athenry, via Monivea. We have not finalised any timetables as of yet and we do not have an indicative timeframe for delivery of this service at this point. It is worth noting that any service will be subject to PSO (Public Service Obligation) funding and resource availability.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Anne Rabbitte, T.D
------------	-----	---	---	---	--------------------

09/09/2024	197	<p>PQ Referred: 33966/24, for answer 09/09/2024, Written from - Alan Kelly</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 197</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to consider pedestrianisation of the old bridge between Ballina and Killaloe in the future.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to Active Travel. Funding is administered through the National Transport Authority (NTA), who, in partnership with local authorities, have responsibility for the selection and development of specific projects in each local authority area.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 197 of 09 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>In December 2021 Tipperary County Council and Clare County Council approved the Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan for the future development of the twin towns.</p> <p>The Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan aims to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to public realm enhancements within Killaloe in County Clare and Ballina in County Tipperary, providing a clear vision for Killaloe and Ballina as linked settlements.</p> <p>Central to all future developments in the linked settlements is the Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement Scheme which is currently at construction, to provide a western bypass for Killaloe town and a new bridge crossing of the River Shannon, changing travel and mobility patterns into and around both settlements.</p> <p>A key goal of the plan is to enhance connectivity of the Towns by the transition of the bridge to a pedestrian and cycle link, through the pedestrianization of the bridge zone. The delivery of the plan will be subject to identifying and securing the necessary funding for its implementation.</p> <p>A copy of the plan can be accessed at the below link.</p> <p>https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/planning/publications/killaloe-ballina-town-enhancement-mobility-plan-january-2022-45840.pdf</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Alan Kelly T.D
------------	-----	--	---	---	----------------

09/09/2024	243	<p>PQ Referred: 34882/24, for answer 09/09/2024, Written from - Brendan Griffin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 243</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if active travel funding for the development of walking and cycling infrastructure will be extended to a rural area (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to Active Travel. Funding is administered through the National Transport Authority (NTA), who, in partnership with local authorities, have responsibility for the selection and development of specific projects in each local authority area.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 243 of 09 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>We can confirm that we have no current plans for funding Active Travel works in the Keel area, nor are we aware of any plans by Kerry County Council to apply for funding for such works in Keel.</p> <p>If Kerry County Council wish to apply for funding for specific plans in the area, we would welcome this and work with them to see what might be possible in a future Active Travel funding programme for the County.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Brendan Griffin, T.D
------------	-----	---	--	--	----------------------

09/09/2024	285	<p>PQ Referred: 35395/24, for answer 09/09/2024, Written from - Marian Harkin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 285</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if the Sligo to Tubbercurry route will be part of the Connecting Ireland Programme for 2025; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and New Town Services.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new services, including in County Sligo, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 285 of 09 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>We are reviewing public transport connections on the corridor mentioned in your query. We have no definitive timeframe for completion of the review at this point in time but will update when this review is complete.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Marian Harkin, T.D
------------	-----	---	---	---	--------------------

09/09/2024	288	<p>PQ Referred: 35426/24, for answer 09/09/2024, Written from - Sean Fleming</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 288</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport when a Leap card facility will be available at a train station (details supplied); the future plans, in view of the growing rail traffic at this location; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Details Supplied: Portlaoise Train Station, Co. Laois</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the provision of integrated ticketing and information systems for public transport, including the Leap card.</p> <p>Given the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Minister,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 288 of 09 September last and to your Parliamentary Question No. 192 of 05 November, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>In 2023, the NTA published its National Fares Strategy which is available at the link below. The objectives of the strategy are to ensure fares are equitable, consistent, and easy to understand.</p> <p>https://www.nationaltransport.ie/publications/national-fares-strategy-2023/</p> <p>The first phase of the Fares Restructuring focuses on the Dublin City Zone & Dublin Commuter Zone as outlined in the NTA Fares Determination 2024, link of which is provided below, is expected to be delivered in Q1 2025, subject to the delivery of the appropriate infrastructure by Irish Rail's supplier. In a subsequent fares determination the focus will be on delivering the new fares strategy on a national level for all other services outside of Dublin, however it will not involve the enabling of leap card capabilities in stations outside the Dublin and other city commuter zones. Ticketing for services from Portlaoise will remain as is but some further innovation may accrue from the delivery of the Next Generation Ticketing project across the rail network.</p> <p>https://www.nationaltransport.ie/publications/nta-fares-determination-2024/</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Sean Fleming, T.D.
------------	-----	--	--	---	--------------------

09/09/2024

312

PQ Referred: 35964/24, for answer 09/09/2024, Written from - Brendan Smith

Dail Question No: 312

To ask the Minister for Transport further to Parliamentary Question No. 12 of 4 July 2024, the progress to date in rolling out a new local area hackney scheme; if in introducing a new scheme he will ensure easy access to such services for persons, particularly those without their own transport or close family support living in remote areas; if he will ensure that a new and viable scheme will be introduced without delay; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Answer

The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA), under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016. I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV industry.

The NTA issues local area hackney (LAH) licences where applicants can show that there is a need for this part-time service and that it will not displace or replace current SPSV providers in a given area.

The 2023 LAH Pilot scheme, launched by the NTA in January 2023, was a €6,000 grant-aided initiative to support rural transport needs, where existing transport services were found to be lacking. A local area hackney may only pick up passengers within a designated area of about 10km and may not pick up a new fare at a drop off point or any other point outside its designated area. The scheme was not successful, as despite significant work undertaken by the NTA to support applicants, only two operators were licensed. The NTA is reviewing the outcome of the scheme and considering next steps.

As you may already be aware, the NTA is currently procuring a digital platform for access to rural open public transport – the Smart DRT pilot, as part of Connecting Ireland. This platform is expected to both improve people’s access to open public transport and provide automated and optimised bus service routing/scheduling in rural areas. The Smart DRT pilot project is due to start in 2025 in three areas (rural, suburban and urban) and, if proven successful, could expand further from 2026 onwards.

Given the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 312 of 09 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The NTA continues to accept Local Area Hackney (LAH) applications. As at 31 August 2024, there were 26 Local Area Hackney vehicles licenced and 18 Local Area Hackney drivers licenced, with 20 active LAH operators* in the areas set out in the table below:

County	Total number of LAH Driver Licences	Areas
CAVAN	3	BALLYJAMESDUFF
		CROSSERLOUGH
		BELTURBET
CLARE	1	WHITEGATE/MOUNTSHANNON
DONEGAL	2	GLENTIES
		CLONMANY
GALWAY	1	MONIVEA
KERRY	1	BROSNA
KILKENNY	1	GRAIGUENAMANAGH
LONGFORD	1	LANESBOROUGH
MAYO	1	BELMULLET
MEATH	3	SLANE
		SUMMERHILL
		SELLER
MONAGHAN	2	EMYVALE
		KNOCKATALLON
SLIGO	1	CLIFFONY
TIPPERARY	1	BALLINLOUGH
WATERFORD	1	KNOCKANORE
WESTMEATH	1	CASTLEPOLLARD
TOTAL	20	

*a person holding an SPSV driver’s licence can operate a taxi, hackney or limousine; this figure includes 2 such licence holders who operate local area hackneys

With regard to the Local Hackney Pilot 2023 (LHP23), this launched in January 2023 across 21 locations. The Pilot provided grant aid for a period of 12 months from the date of licensing to successful applicants. Following the close out of that 12 month grant aided period earlier this year, NTA assessed the outcomes of the Pilot. The Pilot was unfortunately not successful despite significant work undertaken by the NTA to support applicants, with only two operators originally licensed and only a single operator completing the 12 month grant aided period. Please note that we did provide the one continuing operator with a further 6 months of grant aid. That will bring the aid up to October 24.

The lessons learned from LHP23 are informing NTA’s plans to develop future LAH services and the NTA can confirm that future initiatives will aim to address the shortcomings identified by the review of the 2023 Pilot in order to offer practical solutions to address public transport needs in rural areas.

The NTA will publicise any updates to the Local Area Hackney

Brendan Smith, T.D.

application process on its website where proposed.

I trust that the above is of assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne Graham
Chief Executive

09/09/2024	283	<p>PQ Referred: 35378/24, for answer 09/09/2024, Written from - Michael Healy-Rae</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 283</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if a vehicle registration issue for a person (details supplied) will be expedited; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry, including vehicle registration for SPSVs, is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA), under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Act 2013 and 2016. I have no role in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV industry.</p> <p>Vehicle requirements for vehicles intended to be used as SPSVs are set out in Schedule 2 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations, 2015. I am aware that the NTA has produced a list of vehicles, sorted by make and model, that indicates whether or not a vehicle may meet statutory requirements. This is known as the 'Suitable Vehicle List' and is available here:https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Suitable_Vehicle_List_13_07_2023.pdf. Before a driver intends to buy a vehicle to use as a taxi or hackney, they must check the Suitable Vehicle List and the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual (available here:https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Initial_Suitability_Inspection_Manual.pdf) to ensure that the vehicle is likely to be suitable for that purpose.</p> <p>I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 283 of 09 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>The NTA can confirm having received details of vehicle [Redacted Information]. The vehicle was approved by NTA for licensing on the next day, 30 August 2024 and an email confirming the approval was sent to the address provided by [Redacted Information] on that same day, the 30 August 2024. The NTA's turnaround time for vehicle approvals is 10 working days.</p> <p>The NTA can further confirm that on 02 September 2024, [Redacted Information] made an appointment for the vehicle to undergo its suitability inspection on 12 September 2024. When [Redacted Information] called to make this booking, he was advised that earlier suitability appointments were available, however he chose the later date of 12 September 2024 in order to install the meter in the meantime. [Redacted Information] did contact the NTA again on 09 September 2024 seeking an earlier appointment, but no appointments were available prior to his scheduled inspection date of 12 September 2024.</p> <p>The vehicle passed inspection on the 12 September 2024 and was licenced with immediate effect to operate as an SPSV.</p> <p>[Redacted Information]</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p> </p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Michael Healy-Rae, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	--	-------------------------

18/09/2024	150	<p>PQ Referred: 36534/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Seán Haughey</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 150</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if Irish Rail's Dart+ Coastal North Project will be revised, given that Clongriffin Dart station could be utilised instead to provide for additional trains going north, on the grounds that it has three lines of tracks available and is a smaller and more secure station for changeovers than the station at Howth Junction; if research has been carried out in respect of this option; if using a smaller station would reduce costs for this project while allowing for the continuation of a direct service from the city centre to Howth; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure in the Greater Dublin Area, including the DART+ Programme and its constituent projects, which includes DART+ Coastal North.</p> <p>This project aims to extend the overhead electric wires on the DART system by circa 37km, from Malahide to Drogheda. It will allow for high-frequency and fully electrified DART trains to operate between Dublin city and Drogheda, upgrading the rail service to growing communities along the route.</p> <p>The DART+ Coastal North was submitted to Government in May 2024 and received consent for approval under Approval Gate 1 of the Infrastructure Guidelines. A Railway Order for DART+ Coastal North was lodged in July 2024. The public have been invited to make submissions as part of the Railway Order consultation which is currently open until October 23rd 2024, which will be duly considered by An Bord Pleanála as part of the board's decision-making process.</p> <p>The infrastructural changes proposed by DART+ Coastal North will permit both direct and shuttle services to operate from Howth. To achieve maximum operational capacity, for every service that is operated direct to Howth, there would be one less service operating north of Howth Junction. This would result in a doubling of frequencies on the Howth branch compared to existing service levels which is typically three trains per hour per direction.</p> <p>The implementation of a shuttle service is an operational matter, which will have to be decided on in the future following the delivery of the infrastructure. A separate consultation process would have to be conducted prior to the introduction of a shuttle service, as part of the regular timetable review.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a more detailed reply on the specific issue raised. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 150 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>A planning consent application for the DART+ Coastal North, inclusive of proposals at Howth Junction & Donaghmede Station has now been made to An Bord Pleanála and a formal statutory process is in operation. The NTA, in its Approving Authority role, has been informed by Iarnród Éireann during the preferred option development process and has reviewed the Railway Order (RO) documentation prior to lodgement.</p> <p>Within the Railway Order application, it is proposed that, at some point in the future, the DART service pattern will change such that the DARTs running to the City Centre would operate mainly on the Northern Line (Connolly-Malahide-Drogheda), and the line between Howth Junction and Howth would operate mainly as a feeder shuttle service, with a train transfer required at Howth Junction for onward journeys to the city centre.</p> <p>The introduction of this proposal is several years away and relates to the need to provide, in the future, a significantly higher level of service on the Northern Line than that which exists at present, to deal with the projected large population growth across the Fingal/Meath towns of Lusk, Skerries, Balbriggan, Laytown, Drogheda, etc. Currently, the DART service branches at Howth Junction is delivering only a 20 minute service frequency to Howth and the same to Malahide.</p> <p>It is envisaged that, in the future, train services operating at close to 5 minute intervals will be needed on the Northern Line to cater for the forecast passenger numbers. This would represent, effectively, the operational limit of the twin track Northern Line and, accordingly, the capacity wouldn't be available to run additional trains directly between Howth and the City Centre.</p> <p>In such event, it is proposed that a high frequency DART shuttle would be put in place between Howth and Howth Junction, operating at a service frequency of every ten minutes or better. The frequency of trains to Howth, albeit on a shuttle service from Howth Junction, would at least double under this proposal. Passengers from Howth to the City Centre would have to change at Howth Junction onto the Northern Line DARTs. The changing of trains is acknowledged as an inconvenience – the positive is the higher frequency of the train services on both branches, so less overall waiting time is expected. Recognizing the concerns about interchanging in Howth Junction Station, the DART+ Coastal North proposals include a revised station design, which will make changing trains easier.</p> <p>This proposal, which as aforementioned is several years away, will be</p>	Seán Haughey, T.D.
------------	-----	--	--	--	--------------------

very positive overall, with much more frequent train services on the Northern Line and to Howth. The trade-off to make this work is the interchange requirement for Howth passengers, the interchange will happen in an upgraded station though.

Ultimately, it may be possible to still run some direct train services from Howth to the City Centre at certain times during the day under the above proposal, this is something that will be assessed as part of a detailed timetable simulation exercise which will be carried out at a later stage.

On the issue that you raise about Clongriffin station and the short section of third track that is planned at that location, this does not alter the overall capacity constraint that will exist on the Northern Line south of Howth Junction, which is where the Howth and Malahide DART services currently combines. Any track changes north of Howth Junction & Donaghmede Station does not provide any additional train path capacity on the section between Connolly and Howth Junction & Donaghmede Stations.

I trust that the above information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Creegan,
Deputy Chief Executive.

18/09/2024	157	<p>PQ Referred: 36830/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Catherine Murphy</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 157</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the progress that has been achieved by the National Transport Authority in the past three months on works (details supplied); and if this work is likely to commence before the end of the year.</p> <p>Details Supplied: Installation of a shelter at Dublin Bus Pole Number 738</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, as Minister for Transport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of bus stops/shelters nationally.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 157 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>Since my response of 29 April (which I have attached for ease of reference) our bus shelter contractor has continued to liaise with Dublin City Council (DCC) to obtain the necessary letter of consent from the Council – this is required in order to submit a planning permission application. Following discussions with Dublin City Council, we have been advised to assemble packages of bus shelters planning applications, based on the Council's administrative areas. Bus stop number 738 will form part of the package for the Northside region.</p> <p>Once we receive the necessary letter of consent from DCC, the planning application will be submitted for determination. At this stage, it is likely, subject to planning permission being granted, that the bus shelter at bus stop no. 738 will be constructed early next year.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan, Deputy Chief Executive.</p>	Catherine Murphy, T.D.
------------	-----	--	---	---	------------------------

18/09/2024	156	<p>PQ Referred: 36792/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Alan Kelly</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 156</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he will outline the increased investment being made on local link services in Tipperary, including future plans for such extension.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and New Town Services.</p> <p>The rollout of transport services in County Tipperary under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is dependent on the annual Estimates process.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new services, including in County Tipperary, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 156 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>TFI Local Link bus services connect communities throughout rural Ireland as part of the Transport for Ireland Network. TFI Local Link operate two types of services: Regular Rural Services (RRS) which operate on a fixed route between towns and villages and run on a scheduled timetable, and Door-to-Door Bus Services (DRT) which operate along the same routes with the option to divert to collect and drop off passengers at their home with frequencies ranging from once a week to daily. These services are managed and administrated by 15 transport coordination units (TCUs) nationwide with Tipperary services managed by TFI Local Link Tipperary.</p> <p>The funding for TFI Local Link RRS routes in Tipperary has increased almost 300% since 2020, predominantly through the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and the introduction of the Clonmel Town service in 2023. The Clonmel Town bus service is a significant investment by the NTA in the town and it operates 7 days a week including early morning and late evening services and is currently carrying in excess of 5,300 passenger journeys per week.</p> <p>The current public transport projects being considered for 2024/2025 in Tipperary include (subject to the availability of funding):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment of 850 TFI Local Link service to operate more public transport services between Roscrea and Thurles; • New Nenagh – Thurles – Cashel – Clonmel public transport service; • New service operating between Thurles and Tipperary Town (B51); • Significant upgrade of TFI Local Link 854 service operating between Nenagh and Roscrea; • Minor upgrade of TFI Local Link 834 service operating between Roscrea and Portlaoise; • Minor amendment of TFI Local Link 322 service operating between Nenagh and Portumna; and • Review of 332/323/391/855 services. <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Alan Kelly T.D
------------	-----	--	--	---	----------------

18/09/2024	129	<p>PQ Referred: 36192/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Pauline Tully</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 129</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the percentage of the bus network and rail network, respectively that was accessible to disabled people in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024, in tabular form.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>Under the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for promoting the development of an integrated, accessible public transport network. The NTA works with the relevant public transport operators, who have responsibility for day to day operational issues, to progressively make public transport accessible.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for accessible public transport, in conjunction with the transport operators as appropriate, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 129 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Unfortunately, It is not possible to state the percentage of the bus network and rail network, that was accessible to disabled people in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024, in tabular form.</p> <p>Accessibility is not just for wheelchairs users but for people with visual or hearing impairments, hidden disabilities and elderly persons. The transport systems are made up of vehicles, bus stops, and stations, which I have categorised below.</p> <p>Bus Fleet</p> <p>City & Town Bus Fleet</p> <p>All Public Service Obligation (PSO contract) urban and town bus services are low-floor wheelchair accessible. The NTA has worked with our operators and stakeholders to improve the accessibility of our new bus fleet to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yellow colour at the front of all buses; • Yellow hand-rails; • Separate wheelchair and buggy spaces; • Additional Real-time information signs; • Back-up manual ramp at the centre door; • Induction loops; and • More priority seating with more identifiable seat colours. • Audio and visual information displays <p>Regional Bus Fleet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional bus services on Public Service Obligation (PSO) routes are primarily delivered by single deck or double deck coaches. Coaches differ from buses as they are designed to carry seated passengers only (no standing passengers) and to operate at higher speeds plus over longer distances. Up until 2019, all of the wheelchair accessible single deck coaches operated by Bus Éireann required an external wheelchair lift to lift the passenger onto the high floor of the coach, in addition to the prior removal of up to four passenger seats. • Since then, the NTA has been purchasing low floor coaches, with permanent wheelchair spaces, on regional bus routes which will facilitate roll-on wheelchair access onto these services, to replace some of the vehicles with the wheelchair lift. There are now 180 low floor double deck vehicles, with 5 more been added in the coming weeks, for the PSO fleet. All recent purchases include additional accessibility elements as mentioned above. • Due to the fleet investments over recent years, all of the coaches on the Bus Éireann PSO routes are now wheelchair accessible albeit some with a wheelchair lift. 	Pauline Tully, T.D
------------	-----	---	--	--	--------------------

Local Link Bus Fleet

Local Link scheduled services are 95% wheelchair accessible.

Bus Stops

- Most city bus stops are fully wheelchair accessible.
- In relation to regional and inter-urban coach services, the operation of a wheelchair lift from a high floor coach requires a hard concrete area, with a width in excess of 3 metres. It can be very difficult to achieve these widths on the footpaths of many of the streets across Ireland's towns.
- The NTA actively engage with local authorities to arrange the installation of accessible bus stops suitable for high floor coaches in the larger towns of greater than a population of 5,000 across Ireland and at other locations where the relevant local authority identifies. Of the original 43 towns identified in the survey, to install an inbound and outbound stop, 25 towns are completed, 7 towns are now served by low floor coaches with the remaining stops in 11 Towns are being discussed with the Local Authorities. An additional 21 accessible bus stops have been constructed/in construction also at other locations.
- An additional audit recently identified 98 towns with populations over 1,000. Of those, 1 town have completed construction with another 12 Towns are presently in construction. The NTA will continue to work with the Local Authorities on progressing through the nearly 100 newly identified towns.
- The NTA work with and fund the Local Authorities for the installation of new accessible bus stops for new bus routes and Local Link services for Connecting Ireland. There are over 17,500 bus stops in Ireland. Nearly 13,000 have been surveyed and 62% of those are wheelchair accessible. The remaining 4,500 stops have yet to be surveyed.

Stations

Rail

The NTA continue to provide funding to Irish Rail to upgrade their stations which are of varying ages and were not built with accessibility in mind. In 2021, three rail stations had a footbridge and lifts installed to allow passengers with disabilities and elderly people, access easily to both sides of the platforms. Two rail stations were completed in 2022. One station in 2023 and Banteer was completed with opening in July 2024. Rathmore Rail station commenced construction of footbridge, lifts and internal accessibility works in June 2024. A tender for construction has just been awarded for Maynooth Railway Station for a new footbridge ,lifts and other accessibility works also. It is important to note that railway station accessibility improvement works will be proceeding on an ongoing basis.

Bus

The NTA have provided funding to Bus Éireann to assess and update their Bus Stations to comply with all accessibility regulations. They aim to complete these works over a 4 year plan. The Authority has

provided funding to install wheelchair accessible bays for coaches with wheelchair lifts and other external improvements in 23 Bus Éireann stations and 2 Rail stations. To date, 20 stations, out of a total of 25, have been completed. One bus bay in is under construction with the remaining four locations to be progressed following design completion.

I trust that the above is of assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne Graham
Chief Executive

18/09/2024	155	<p>PQ Referred: 36769/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Mairéad Farrell</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 155</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if a replacement operator for the 418-bus route from Athenry-Galway city will be found following the ending of the current service; if he will consider providing a public bus service on this route; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 155 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Following the cessation of the route 418 service, we assessed the Athenry to Galway corridor to ascertain whether there was a Public Service Obligation (PSO) on the Authority to intervene to provide bus services. Following the assessment, the Authority has determined that there is a Public Service Obligation to intervene. We have determined that three additional return trips are warranted on the Galway to Athenry corridor.</p> <p>The NTA will now liaise with Local Link to develop a timetable and service plan.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Mairéad Farrell, T.D
------------	-----	---	---	--	----------------------

18/09/2024	125	<p>PQ Referred: 36099/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Aindrias Moynihan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 125</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if his Department will sanction a direct shuttle bus service between Cork Airport and Cork city centre; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 125 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>Cork Airport is served by route 225 and route 226. Together these combine to provide a 30-minute frequency between the train station and Cork Airport via the City Centre. After picking up at City Hall, the buses proceed on a limited stop basis to the Airport via the South City Link. There are no plans to alter this arrangement. Routes 225 and 226 will be replaced by new route 13 under the Cork BusConnects Network Redesign which will retain the existing 30-minute frequency.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Aindrias Moynihan, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	---	-------------------------

18/09/2024	126	<p>PQ Referred: 36119/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Duncan Smith</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 126</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to provide an update on the delivery of a safe traffic plan for students and parents at schools (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Details Supplied: Malahide Portmarnock ETNS</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme was launched in March 2021 with the aim of supporting walking, scooting, and cycling to primary and post-primary schools, and creating safer walking and cycling routes within communities, through the provision of infrastructure interventions. This should help alleviate congestion at school gates and increase the number of students who walk or cycle to school. The Safe Routes to School Programme is funded by my Department through the National Transport Authority and An Taisce's Green Schools is co-ordinating the programme.</p> <p>Invitations to express interest were sent to all primary and secondary schools in the country, and 931 applications were received from schools across every county in Ireland. 170 schools were notified on 21st June 2021 that they were selected for inclusion in the first round of the SRTS Programme with 1 school subsequently withdrawing, while a further 108 schools were announced for Round 2 in December 2022. It should be noted that all schools that applied to the original call for applications were accepted into the programme, and if not selected in Rounds 1 and 2 will be selected for forthcoming rounds.</p> <p>It is my understanding that Malahide Portmarnock ETNS was not included in the first 2 rounds of funding; however as they have submitted an application, they will not be required to reapply as all schools which applied will come into the programme on a rolling basis.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the programme, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 126 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme was developed on request of the Department of Transport. All schools in the state were eligible to apply to the programme. By the deadline of 16th April 2021, 933 schools applied for the programme. Malahide Portmarnock ETNS was one of those schools that send in their application.</p> <p>The Round 1 (170 schools) and Round 2 (108 schools) were selected using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Mix of school type (primary, secondary); Ø Mix of location [those within urban speed limits of 60kph or less (village, town, city, suburban) and rural – schools situated on 80kph road]; Ø Socio-economic mix (non-DEIS, DEIS schools); Ø School's commitment to sustainable travel (the school has already demonstrated a commitment to promote walking or cycling and other active modes e.g. Walk on Wednesday, Cycle on Wednesday, Cycle Bus, Park'n'Stride, audits etc.); Ø Cluster of schools (if schools are located on the same campus or street/section of road). <p>The Safe Routes to School Programme has recently launched the Round 3 based on the original criteria, liaison with local authorities' active travel teams to capture local knowledge and ensure complementarity with other active travel schemes being implemented or planned, and a selection of schools on rural higher speed roads.</p> <p>Malahide Portmarnock ETNS is included in this round and will be contacted by a member of the SRTS to audit the school needs and coordinate the production of a Delivery Plan to address the particular issues. After this, the scheme will be delivered in coming months depending on several factors, including reaching an agreement with the school, Local Authority and external resources (design and construction), timelines for public engagement and consultation, securing planning consent, securing a contractor and timing construction periods to reduce school disturbance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Duncan Smith, T.D.
------------	-----	--	--	---	--------------------

18/09/2024	149	<p>PQ Referred: 36533/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Brian Stanley</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 149</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he will extend the time to renew a taxi licence beyond the current 24 months, in cases in which the licence holder has been through a long period of serious illness within the specified 24 months.</p> <p>Dail Question No: 165 To ask the Minister for Transport if he will review the current renewal timeframe of 24 months where a taxi licence has lapsed, in cases where the licence holder may have been hospitalised due to Covid and incapacitated due to other serious illnesses during the two-year renewal period and has since been endeavouring to renew the licence; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry, including SPSV licensing, is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA), under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Act 2013 and 2016. I have no role in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV industry.</p> <p>In July 2021, under The Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measure COVID-19) (Expired Licence) Regulations 2021, the NTA increased the 12-month period that a taxi, hackney or limousine licence may remain in inactive status after its expiry, to 24 months. This was a permanent amendment to the Regulations.</p> <p>I have referred your question to the NTA for attention and direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 149 & 165 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Please see details below in response to both Parliamentary Questions;</p> <p>SPSV vehicle licences can be in any one of 3 status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active – has been renewed and licence is current; • inactive expired – licence has expired and licence holder has a statutory period of time (see further below) within which the licence can be replaced; • timed out – the statutory period of time within which the licence can be replaced has expired and the licence is incapable of being replaced <p>Whilst the NTA does not have details of the case the Deputy refers to, the NTA can advise that prior to licences entering inactive expired status, the NTA issues reminders to the addresses on file to support SPSV (vehicle) licence holders in maintaining an active licence. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a reminder to renew, 8 weeks prior to the expiry date; (ii) confirmation of expiry of the licence from which the licence holder has a period of time within which to renew. <p>These letters are courtesy letters, which the NTA issues to licence holders by way of reminder, however, they do not replace a licence holder’s obligation to take action in relation to their licence within the required, statutory timelines.</p> <p>Once an SPSV licence enters into timed out status, no further action can be taken in relation to the licence.</p> <p>Once a licence is expired (“inactive expired” status), a licence holder has a period of time under law to replace it. As and from 7th April 2014, pursuant to regulation 17 of the Small Public Service Vehicle (Consolidation and Reform) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 165/2014), there was a 12 month limit on the period within which an expired vehicle licence may be replaced. Regulation 17 provided as follows:</p> <p>“Replacement of expired licence</p> <p>17. (1) Except where—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a small public service vehicle licence has been surrendered or revoked, or (b) in the case of a local area hackney licence, a period of three years has elapsed since the initial grant of such licence, <p>the holder of a small public service vehicle licence that has expired may, subject to this Regulation, apply to the Authority for the replacement of the expired licence in respect of the same vehicle or a</p>	Brian Stanley, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	---	---------------------

different vehicle provided that such application shall be accompanied by the relevant fee specified in Schedule 1.

(2) The Authority may approve an application under paragraph (1) provided that—

(a) the application is made to the Authority on or before the date falling twelve months after the date of expiry of the licence, and

(b) following an assessment of the vehicle by or on behalf of the Authority, the Authority is satisfied that the vehicle meets the requirements applicable to the relevant vehicle licence category under Part 4 of these Regulations, provided that where the Authority has determined that a specific vehicle type or model does not comply with the requirements applicable to such vehicle licence category under Part 4 of these Regulations, the Authority may refuse to reactivate the licence without an assessment of the specific vehicle.”

The Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 restated that position.

On 16th July 2021, following public consultation, the NTA Board approved the signing of emergency regulations, namely the Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measure COVID-19) (Expired Licence) Regulations 2021 to assist SPSV licence holders that were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. These regulations amended regulation 17 and extended this replacement period to twenty-four months.

The introduction of all emergency measures was publicised to industry members via the SPSV Latest News section of NTA’s website as follows: notice of the Public Consultation on Draft Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measure COVID-19)(expired Licence) Regulations 2021 on the 18th June 2021; notice of the approval of these regulations on the 16th July 2021; via the SPSV Industry Update; the latter being an industry newsletter issued to licence holders and stakeholders on a quarterly basis by SMS and email. The August 2021 edition was issued on the 20th of August 2021. Further, emails were issued to licence holders confirming the extension to vehicle licences as a result of these emergency regulations.

The result of these measures is best seen by way of example: an SPSV vehicle licence which previously would have entered timed out status on the 1st October 2023, being 12 months after having entered inactive status say, on 1st October 2022, would not now enter into timed out status until 1st October 2024, 24 months after the vehicle licence first expired.

The NTA notes the deputy’s reference to this licence holder’s illness and acknowledges that would have been a difficult time for the licence holder; however NTA is precluded by law from replacing an SPSV licence where an application is received after the period specified in the legislation.

The NTA can advise that there are currently two options available to anyone wishing to return to operating in the SPSV industry:

1 Apply for a new vehicle licence: NTA is currently accepting applications for SPSV licences for the following categories of vehicle: wheelchair accessible taxi, wheelchair accessible hackney and limousine. Further information can be found in Guide G1 "Applying for an SPSV vehicle licence". NTA has operated a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Scheme for a number of years including this year, which provides a grant of up to €17,500 towards the purchase of a Wheelchair Accessible SPSV. The Scheme is closed for 2024, but is expected to operate once again in 2025, and all updates and news on such a Scheme will be published on the NTA website. Second hand WAVs can be an economic option and a second-hand WAV up to 6 years of age can be licensed and then operated until it reaches 15 years from the date of first registration. Reduced licensing fees of €125 apply to WAV vehicle licences.

2 Rent a licenced, insured SPSV: SPSV Regulations permit a vehicle licence holder to rent the insured vehicle to another person. The person providing the rental must own the vehicle or be entitled to use it as an SPSV while also being the holder of the vehicle licence, and must provide appropriate insurance for the period of the rental. The driver renting the vehicle must ensure they create a driver to vehicle link before operating. NTA's website has more information on renting an SPSV and driver linking.

Should SPSV drivers require financial support, the Microenterprise Loan Fund provides vital support by filling the lending gap in the market by lending to businesses that cannot obtain loans from other commercial lenders. Further information on the range of services offered by Microfinance Ireland is available at <https://microfinanceireland.ie/>. Information on the different routes to operating in the SPSV industry can be found in Chapter 9 of the NTA Official Manual for Operating in the SPSV Industry.

I trust that the above is of assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne Graham
Chief Executive

18/09/2024	130	<p>PQ Referred: 36193/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Pauline Tully</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 130</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the supports that are available to taxi operators for the provision of wheelchair-accessible taxis; the funding provided in the Budget to support the provision of wheelchair accessible taxis in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024; and the number of wheelchair accessible taxis in operation in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and to date in 2024, in tabular form.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA), under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016. I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV industry.</p> <p>My Department is committed to making public transport accessible for all and has introduced a number of initiatives to support this. In order to increase the wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) penetration of the SPSV fleet nationwide (taxis, hackneys, and limousines), the NTA introduced S.I. No. 250 of 2010 (Taxi Regulation Act 2003 (Grant of Taxi Licences) (Amendment) Regulations 2010) in June 2010, to only issue new taxi and hackney licences for wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys.</p> <p>This S.I. has been supported by wheelchair accessible vehicle grants to provide financial support towards the acquisition or conversion of suitable vehicles to operate as WAVs in the SPSV fleet. Under this Scheme, drivers can avail of up to €17,500 in grant funding. The Scheme is administered by the NTA.</p> <p>I have referred your question to the NTA for further information and direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 130 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>Please see below in response to the specific questions asked in Parliamentary Question number 130 of the 18 September 2024.</p> <p>1. The supports that are available to taxi operators for the provision of wheelchair-accessible taxis</p> <p>In concerted efforts to increase the wheelchair accessible vehicle penetration of the SPSV fleet nationwide (taxis, hackneys, and limousines), the Taxi Regulation Act 2003 (Grant of Taxi Licences) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 provided that new taxi and hackney licences would only issue for wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys. New saloon taxi and hackney licences have not been issued since that date.</p> <p>The NTA operates a grant scheme to assist SPSV operators in providing wheelchair accessible vehicles which includes taxis, limousines, and hackneys, to the public. The WAV Grant Scheme was first offered in 2014 and has run each year since. The grant assists operators with the purchase and conversion of new and replacement WAVs. Under the scheme, operators can licence a WAV up to 6 years of age which can then be operated as an SPSV until it reaches 15 years of age from date of first registration.</p> <p>The WAV14 – WAV22 Grant schemes offered financial aid of up to €7,500 for the purchase or conversion of new or replacement WAVs nationwide; in 2023 the maximum grant available was increased to €17,500 in response to the increasing cost of WAVs. as the cost of WAVs increased significantly.</p> <p>It is a condition of the WAV Grant that recipients attend Disability Awareness Training, which NTA provides free charge and is carried out by the Irish Wheelchair Association. The training must be completed by operators prior to receiving payment. The purpose of the training is to prepare drivers for dealing with persons with disabilities and the operation of the WAV.</p> <p>WAV licences are also added to the fleet without WAV Grant Scheme support. In 2023, 160 further WAV licences were added to the fleet without the assistance of grant aid. So far this year 51 wheelchair accessible taxi licences have been added to the fleet, to date, without grant aid.</p> <p>As a further support to increase wheelchair accessible numbers in the fleet, the costs associated with gaining a licence currently are very low, at €125. This compares very favourably with the previous cost of</p>	Pauline Tully, T.D
------------	-----	---	---	---	--------------------

				<p>€6,300 for a standard saloon licence.</p> <p>2. The funding to support the provision of wheelchair accessible taxis in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024</p> <p>The NTA publishes this information annually in its SPSV Bulletin. Table 6 of the SPSV Bulletin 2023 provides the requested information on grant funding provided via the NTA WAV Grant Scheme from 2014 – 2023.</p> <p>As of the end September 2024, €5,022,000 has been allocated for granting to successful applicants. Applications will continue to be processed until the Scheme closes in December.</p> <p>3. The number of wheelchair accessible taxis in operation in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and to date in 2024</p> <p>The NTA publishes this information annually in its SPSV Bulletin. Table 5 of the SPSV Bulletin 2023 provides the requested information on the number of wheelchair accessible taxis in operation from 2014 – 2023.</p> <p>The NTA also publishes a breakdown of the SPSV fleet here monthly. This table provides the most up to date 2024 results for the data requested.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	
--	--	--	--	---	--

18/09/2024	131	<p>PQ Referred: 36205/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Peadar Tóibín</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 131</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the number of demerits under part 5 of the Taxi Regulation Act 2013 that were issued, for each of the past ten years.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) sector, including the collection of statistics regarding demerits, is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA) under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Act 2013 and 2016. I have no role in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV sector.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibilities in the matter, I have referred your question to the NTA for attention. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 131 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>The NTA's role as the Regulator for the SPSV industry includes ensuring compliance with the applicable legislation as set out in the Taxi Regulation Act 2013 and 2016 (the 2013 Act) and the Regulations made thereunder.</p> <p>The NTA's SPSV Bulletin 2023, published on its website and which contains information and data on its compliance activity for 2023, includes data on prosecutions for unlicensed operation. This was in addition to any prosecutions taken by An Garda Síochána who are the licensing authority for SPSV driver licences.</p> <p>The NTA can advise that no demerit offences have been endorsed in the SPSV driver licence records in the past 10 years.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Peadar Tóibín, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	---	---------------------

18/09/2024	128	<p>PQ Referred: 36170/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Matt Carthy</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 128</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if his Department, or any agency under his auspices, has ever used any artificial intelligence software in the preparation of response to parliamentary questions, or in responses to any correspondence from outside the organisation; the details of same if applicable; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Identical Question(s): to all Depts.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>My Department continues to follow guidance from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) “Cyber Security Guidance on Generative AI for Public Sector Bodies”, published on 1 June 2023 which states that access to AI platforms should be blocked</p> <p>“until such time as Departments have conducted the relevant risk assessments, have appropriate usage policies in place and staff awareness on safe usage has been implemented.”</p> <p>Generative AI tools are thus blocked in my Department while officials work to develop guidelines for staff to ensure that any future use takes place in a safe and appropriate manner. Until this work is complete, the current policy in place states that such tools should not be used for any official business.</p> <p>I have asked the Agencies under my aegis to provide the information requested directly to the Deputy. If you do not hear back from the Agencies within 10 working days, please contact my office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 128 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA does not currently make use of A.I (Artificial Intelligence) in the production of responses to PQs that are delivered to Oireachtas members or in responses drafted to any correspondence from outside the organisation. However, there is a project that is ongoing which will see Artificial Intelligence being trialled within the Public Affairs team to generate responses for internal testing only.</p> <p>It should be noted that the NTA has developed an A.I. strategy and a Generative A.I. use policy which, while recognising its potential benefits currently prohibits by default the use of Generative A.I. (e.g. ChatGPT, Azure OpenAI). Generative A.I. can only be used in cases where special exception has been granted by the Executive Board. The only derogation granted to date has been for the internal trial related to the Public Affairs Unit as noted above.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Matt Carthy, T.D
------------	-----	---	---	--	------------------

19/09/2024	124	<p>PQ Referred: 37059/24, for answer 19/09/2024, Written from - Michael Healy-Rae</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 124</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if his Department will consider installing a bus shelter in the centre of Ballybunnion town, County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, as Minister for Transport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of bus shelters.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 124 of 19 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>The NTA has now initiated a "Bus Stop Enhancement Programme" across all local authorities, with an allocation of €500,000 to each local authority as part of the 2024 NTA allocations. The objective of this programme is to facilitate the enhancement / upgrade of existing bus stops across the country, including the provision of poles and hard-standing areas where none exist, the provision of seating (where space exists) and the installation of bus shelters in appropriate locations. It is intended to repeat this as an annual funding stream for a number of years, to enable and facilitate the necessary uplift and enhancements to bus stop locations across the country.</p> <p>Each local authority is being requested to prepare a prioritised programme of bus stop enhancements in their administrative area for design and delivery on a phased basis. The NTA is now engaged with individual local authorities in relation to the development of their programmes for 2024 and subsequent years.</p> <p>Accordingly, it is intended that bus shelter provision will be coordinated by each local authority under the "Bus Stop Enhancement Programme", having regards to the allocation provided by the NTA to each local authority. This approach aligns with the position that the provision of bus shelters is generally not achievable without some works – kerb changes, footpath changes, road markings and similar - being undertaken by local authorities. Through a central supply contract, the NTA will provide the bus shelter to the local authority and will also make available the NTA's bus shelter contractor to undertake its installation (following the Council's preparatory works) and to maintain the bus shelter subsequently.</p> <p>To date the NTA has been collaborating with Kerry County Council regarding the provision of a bus shelter in Ballybunon. The feasibility of installing shelters at the existing bus stop locations in the vicinity of Main Street has been assessed. Unfortunately, it has been determined that none of these existing stops are suitable for the installation of a shelter for a number of technical reasons, primarily relating to the limited available space in addition to the potential negative impact on contiguous properties. Notwithstanding the above, the NTA continues to collaborate with the Council to establish a safe workable solution can be arrived at, which will in all likelihood require the creation of a new stopping place, adjacent to the existing bus stops in the vicinity of Main Street which could be delivered under the "Bus Stop Enhancement Programme". Accordingly, we will bring your request to the attention of the relevant Council personnel who are preparing the Council's prioritised programme in respect of bus stop enhancements.</p>	Michael Healy-Rae, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	--	-------------------------

I trust that the above information is of assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Hugh Creegan
Deputy Chief Executive

18/09/2024	165	<p>PQ Referred: 36533/24, for answer 18/09/2024, Written from - Brian Stanley</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 165</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he will review the current renewal timeframe of 24 months where a taxi licence has lapsed, in cases where the licence holder may have been hospitalised due to Covid and incapacitated due to other serious illnesses during the two-year renewal period and has since been endeavouring to renew the licence; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry, including SPSV licensing, is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA), under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Act 2013 and 2016. I have no role in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV industry.</p> <p>In July 2021, under The Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measure COVID-19) (Expired Licence) Regulations 2021, the NTA increased the 12-month period that a taxi, hackney or limousine licence may remain in inactive status after its expiry, to 24 months. This was a permanent amendment to the Regulations. I have referred your question to the NTA for attention and direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 149 & 165 of 18 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Please see details below in response to both Parliamentary Questions;</p> <p>SPSV vehicle licences can be in any one of 3 status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active – has been renewed and licence is current; • inactive expired – licence has expired and licence holder has a statutory period of time (see further below) within which the licence can be replaced; • timed out – the statutory period of time within which the licence can be replaced has expired and the licence is incapable of being replaced . <p>Whilst the NTA does not have details of the case the Deputy refers to, the NTA can advise that prior to licences entering inactive expired status, the NTA issues reminders to the addresses on file to support SPSV (vehicle) licence holders in maintaining an active licence. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a reminder to renew, 8 weeks prior to the expiry date; (ii) confirmation of expiry of the licence from which the licence holder has a period of time within which to renew. <p>These letters are courtesy letters, which the NTA issues to licence holders by way of reminder, however, they do not replace a licence holder’s obligation to take action in relation to their licence within the required, statutory timelines.</p> <p>Once an SPSV licence enters into timed out status, no further action can be taken in relation to the licence.</p> <p>Once a licence is expired (“inactive expired” status), a licence holder has a period of time under law to replace it. As and from 7th April 2014, pursuant to regulation 17 of the Small Public Service Vehicle (Consolidation and Reform) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 165/2014), there was a 12-month limit on the period within which an expired vehicle licence may be replaced. Regulation 17 provided as follows:</p> <p>“Replacement of expired licence</p> <p>17. (1) Except where—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a small public service vehicle licence has been surrendered or revoked, or (b) in the case of a local area hackney licence, a period of three years has elapsed since the initial grant of such licence, <p>the holder of a small public service vehicle licence that has expired may, subject to this Regulation, apply to the Authority for the replacement of the expired licence in respect of the same vehicle or a</p>	Brian Stanley, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	---	---------------------

				<p>different vehicle provided that such application shall be accompanied by the relevant fee specified in Schedule 1.</p> <p>(2) The Authority may approve an application under paragraph (1) provided that—</p> <p>(a) the application is made to the Authority on or before the date falling twelve months after the date of expiry of the licence, and</p> <p>(b) following an assessment of the vehicle by or on behalf of the Authority, the Authority is satisfied that the vehicle meets the requirements applicable to the relevant vehicle licence category under Part 4 of these Regulations, provided that where the Authority has determined that a specific vehicle type or model does not comply with the requirements applicable to such vehicle licence category under Part 4 of these Regulations, the Authority may refuse to reactivate the licence without an assessment of the specific vehicle.”</p> <p>The Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 restated that position.</p> <p>On 16th July 2021, following public consultation, the NTA Board approved the signing of emergency regulations, namely the Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measure COVID-19) (Expired Licence) Regulations 2021 to assist SPSV licence holders that were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. These regulations amended regulation 17 and extended this replacement period to twenty-four months.</p> <p>The introduction of all emergency measures was publicised to industry members via the SPSV Latest News section of NTA’s website as follows: notice of the Public Consultation on Draft Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measure COVID-19)(expired Licence) Regulations 2021 on the 18th June 2021; notice of the approval of these regulations on the 16th July 2021; via the SPSV Industry Update; the latter being an industry newsletter issued to licence holders and stakeholders on a quarterly basis by SMS and email. The August 2021 edition was issued on the 20th of August 2021. Further, emails were issued to licence holders confirming the extension to vehicle licences as a result of these emergency regulations.</p> <p>The result of these measures is best seen by way of example: an SPSV vehicle licence which previously would have entered timed out status on the 1st October 2023, being 12 months after having entered inactive status say, on 1st October 2022, would not now enter into timed out status until 1st October 2024, 24 months after the vehicle licence first expired.</p> <p>The NTA notes the deputy’s reference to this licence holder’s illness and acknowledges that would have been a difficult time for the licence holder; however NTA is precluded by law from replacing an SPSV licence where an application is received after the period specified in the legislation.</p>	
--	--	--	--	---	--

The NTA can advise that there are currently two options available to anyone wishing to return to operating in the SPSV industry:

1 Apply for a new vehicle licence: NTA is currently accepting applications for SPSV licences for the following categories of vehicle: wheelchair accessible taxi, wheelchair accessible hackney and limousine. Further information can be found in Guide G1 “Applying for an SPSV vehicle licence”. NTA has operated a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Scheme for a number of years including this year, which provides a grant of up to €17,500 towards the purchase of a Wheelchair Accessible SPSV. The Scheme is closed for 2024, but is expected to operate once again in 2025, and all updates and news on such a Scheme will be published on the NTA website. Second hand WAVs can be an economic option and a second-hand WAV up to 6 years of age can be licensed and then operated until it reaches 15 years from the date of first registration. Reduced licensing fees of €125 apply to WAV vehicle licences.

2 Rent a licenced, insured SPSV: SPSV Regulations permit a vehicle licence holder to rent the insured vehicle to another person. The person providing the rental must own the vehicle or be entitled to use it as an SPSV while also being the holder of the vehicle licence, and must provide appropriate insurance for the period of the rental. The driver renting the vehicle must ensure they create a driver to vehicle link before operating. NTA’s website has more information on renting an SPSV and driver linking.

Should SPSV drivers require financial support, the Microenterprise Loan Fund provides vital support by filling the lending gap in the market by lending to businesses that cannot obtain loans from other commercial lenders. Further information on the range of services offered by Microfinance Ireland is available at <https://microfinanceireland.ie/>. Information on the different routes to operating in the SPSV industry can be found in Chapter 9 of the NTA Official Manual for Operating in the SPSV Industry.

I trust that the above is of assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne Graham
Chief Executive

25/09/2024	15	<p>PQ Referred: 38210/24, for answer 25/09/2024, Written from - Pauline Tully</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 15</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the estimated cost of ensuring all remaining Bus Éireann PSO buses are fully wheelchair-accessible.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>Under the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for promoting the development of an integrated, accessible public transport network.</p> <p>The NTA works with the relevant public transport operators, for example Bus Éireann, who have responsibility for day to day operational issues, to progressively make public transport accessible.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for accessible public transport, including the purchase of the PSO fleets, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 15 of 25 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Please note that all buses operated by Bus Éireann on Public Service Obligation (PSO) services are already wheelchair-accessible, as are all coaches operated by Bus Éireann on regular scheduled PSO services.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Pauline Tully, T.D
------------	----	---	--	--	--------------------

24/09/2024	109	<p>PQ Referred: 37802/24, for answer 24/09/2024, Written from - Michael Lowry</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 109</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he supports the integration of a new DART station at Croke Park; if he will engage with Irish Rail, an organisation (details supplied) and other relevant state agencies to proactively facilitate the development of this station, considering Irish Rail's ownership of the railway frontage and the willingness of the organisation to yield additional land required for the station; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Details Supplied: the GAA; given that it is Europe's third largest stadium and the only one among Europe's ten largest stadia without rail services, despite being flanked by railways on either side; if he will ensure that Dublin City Council's redevelopment plans for the lands previously occupied by Croke Park Villas include provisions for a new DART station, given the Council's current designs allow for sufficient separation and clearance for such a development</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including, in consultation with Iarnród Éireann, any proposed new train stations.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter and the specific issues raised by the Deputy, I have referred the Deputies' questions to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 109 of 24 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>As part of the early development of the DART+ Programme the opportunities for additional stations in the environs of Croke Park / Ballybough were considered. A number of physical and operational constraints exist on the existing railway lines in the Ballybough area that reduce the potential for an additional station, and these are presented below.</p> <p>Physical constraints On the former GSWR (Great Southern and Western Railway) line (more northern line crossing the Ballybough Road), the railway is in a restricted area heading east of Ballybough Road towards Connolly and is elevated on a series of bridges and arches which are not suited for the location of a station. West of Ballybough Road the current gradient and tight curvature of the existing track geometry is not in accordance with standards for the provision of a station. Siting stations and platforms on tight curves introduces large stepping gaps between the train and the station platform, and creates accessibility issues for elderly people and people with disabilities. Furthermore, the elevated nature of the existing railway, which is on a 4-metre high embankment in this area, would generate issues regarding overlooking and visual impact on adjacent residential properties.</p> <p>On the former MGWR (Midlands and Great Western Railway) line (line closer to the city and adjacent to the Royal Canal), the railway east of Ballybough Road is in a tight cutting parallel to the Royal Canal alongside Clonmore Terrace where there is limited space to the railway boundary – as a consequent it is not a suitable place to locate a station. West of Ballybough Road and towards Croke Park there is again a steep gradient issue that would impact the siting of a station. Impacts on surrounding properties would also be an issue with the limited space available at this location.</p> <p>Operational constraints This section of the railway is a highly congested area with services from the Sligo line, Maynooth line, M3 Parkway line and Phoenix Park tunnel lines all converging on the City Centre - it would be operationally disruptive to place a suburban stop in this area on the approach to the city. While some trains currently get held here on approach to the station, to stop all suburban services so close to Connolly, an area where there are capacity issues, would cause operational disruption impacting on other movements around the Connolly area, for example on the northern line.</p> <p>Existing Arrangements and Future Proposals The nearest railway station to Croke Park is Drumcondra Station,</p>	Michael Lowry, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	---	---------------------

which is just over 400 metres from the stadium. The GSWR rail line (more commonly referred to as the Maynooth/Sligo Line) serving this station is being transitioned to provide a DART service as far as Maynooth under the DART+ West project recently approved by An Bord Pleanála. It is intended that train service levels on this line will increase substantially following its conversion to an electrified service, which will provide additional rail access opportunities to the stadium.

In addition, the planning consent application for the MetroLink project includes for the development of a major transport interchange at Glasnevin (adjacent to Cross Guns Bridge) linking bus, DART+ and other rail plus MetroLink. This integrated metro and rail station will allow people to change from MetroLink or the other trains serving the station onto a DART to Drumcondra Station or alternatively to walk to the stadium, as the Glasnevin Station will be within an acceptable walking distance from the station for many people.

I trust that the above information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Creegan,
Deputy Chief Executive.

24/09/2024	84	<p>PQ Referred: 37276/24, for answer 24/09/2024, Written from - Bernard J. Durkan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 84</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the reason a bus stop was removed from the top of the Old Bog Road, Kilcock, County Kildare, (L50572), with particular reference to the growing population in the area and reliance of the local population on the stop; if the stop can be reinstated as soon as possible; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, as Minister for Transport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of bus stops/shelters nationally.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 84 of 24 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>The decision to remove the Bus Stop at Kellehers Cross, Old Bog Road was taken by Bus Éireann on safety grounds. However, this was undertaken without the Authority's knowledge or prior approval. Bus Éireann have taken steps to address this in future.</p> <p>The NTA are committed to improving the public transport experience throughout Ireland through the provision of improved service and facilities. On the back of this initiative the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility programme has been launched to encourage the use of public transport and make it more accessible.</p> <p>The Connecting Ireland programme prompted the NTA to commission surveys of the existing network and recommended changes/improvements to the respective local authorities, this process has recently ended with Kildare County Council.</p> <p>I can confirm that the NTA are in full support of the provision of new upgraded infrastructure at this location and have communicated their proposals to Kildare County Council. A design option (to include a new bus lay-by) will be forwarded to Kildare Council for their consideration/approval in the near future.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Bernard Durkan, T.D
------------	----	---	---	--	---------------------

24/09/2024	104	<p>PQ Referred: 37751/24, for answer 24/09/2024, Written from - Steven Matthews</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 104</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he will consider extending the rollout of secure bike lockers at commuter train stations including Greystones and Wicklow town; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including, in consultation with Iarnród Éireann, bike lockers at train stations.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter and the specific issues raised by the Deputy, I have referred the Deputies' questions to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 104 of 24 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>With the increased use of electric bikes and e-scooters, the NTA acknowledges that conventional bike parking stands alone at train stations does not provide the level of security in all cases that owners of these mobility devices require.</p> <p>A review of cycle parking provision at train stations is being undertaken with a view to providing additional secure parking facilities in key stations for both electric bikes and e-scooters. Following that review, Irish Rail, in collaboration with the NTA, will develop proposals for the provision of additional secure cycle/e-scooter storage at identified stations and will proceed with the implementation of those proposals.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan, Deputy Chief Executive.</p>	Steven Matthews, T.D
------------	-----	---	---	---	----------------------

25/09/2024	13	<p>PQ Referred: 37973/24, for answer 25/09/2024, Written from - Paul Murphy</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 13</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport his views on whether a train or DART station should be developed at Croke Park, given it is the only one of the ten largest stadia in Europe without a rail connection.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including, in consultation with Iarnród Éireann, any proposed new train stations.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter and the specific issues raised by the Deputy, I have referred the Deputies' questions to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 13 of 25 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>As part of the early development of the DART+ Programme the opportunities for additional stations in the environs of Croke Park / Ballybough were considered. A number of physical and operational constraints exist on the existing railway lines in the Ballybough area that reduce the potential for an additional station, and these are presented below.</p> <p>Physical constraints</p> <p>On the former GSWR (Great Southern and Western Railway) line (more northern line crossing the Ballybough Road), the railway is in a restricted area heading east of Ballybough Road towards Connolly and is elevated on a series of bridges and arches which are not suited for the location of a station. West of Ballybough Road the current gradient and tight curvature of the existing track geometry is not in accordance with standards for the provision of a station. Siting stations and platforms on tight curves introduces large stepping gaps between the train and the station platform, and creates accessibility issues for elderly people and people with disabilities. Furthermore, the elevated nature of the existing railway, which is on a 4-metre high embankment in this area, would generate issues regarding overlooking and visual impact on adjacent residential properties.</p> <p>On the former MGWR (Midlands and Great Western Railway) line (line closer to the city and adjacent to the Royal Canal), the railway east of Ballybough Road is in a tight cutting parallel to the Royal Canal alongside Clonmore Terrace where there is limited space to the railway boundary – as a consequent it is not a suitable place to locate a station. West of Ballybough Road and towards Croke Park there is again a steep gradient issue that would impact the siting of a station. Impacts on surrounding properties would also be an issue with the limited space available at this location.</p> <p>Operational constraints</p> <p>This section of the railway is a highly congested area with services from the Sligo line, Maynooth line, M3 Parkway line and Phoenix Park tunnel lines all converging on the City Centre - it would be operationally disruptive to place a suburban stop in this area on the approach to the city. While some trains currently get held here on approach to the station, to stop all suburban services so close to Connolly, an area where there are capacity issues, would cause operational disruption impacting on other movements around the Connolly area, for example on the northern line.</p> <p>Existing Arrangements and Future Proposals</p> <p>The nearest railway station to Croke Park is Drumcondra Station,</p>	Paul Murphy, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	--	-------------------

which is just over 400 metres from the stadium. The GSWR rail line (more commonly referred to as the Maynooth/Sligo Line) serving this station is being transitioned to provide a DART service as far as Maynooth under the DART+ West project recently approved by An Bord Pleanála. It is intended that train service levels on this line will increase substantially following its conversion to an electrified service, which will provide additional rail access opportunities to the stadium.

In addition, the planning consent application for the MetroLink project includes for the development of a major transport interchange at Glasnevin (adjacent to Cross Guns Bridge) linking bus, DART+ and other rail plus MetroLink. This integrated metro and rail station will allow people to change from MetroLink or the other trains serving the station onto a DART to Drumcondra Station or alternatively to walk to the stadium, as the Glasnevin Station will be within an acceptable walking distance from the station for many people.

I trust that the above information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Creegan,
Deputy Chief Executive.

26/09/2024	123	<p>PQ Referred: 38442/24, for answer 26/09/2024, Written from - Bernard J. Durkan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 123</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the reason it has not been found possible to extend the bus service from Naas to Blanchardstown to cater for outpatients attending Blanchardstown Hospital, notwithstanding the numerous occasions on which it has been raised, and given that patients have to travel by car, park at a parking meter, occupy space and top up the meter as required in the event of a long wait; if urgent steps can be taken to examine the feasibility of such an extension, having particular regard to the policy to limit the number of cars in the city on a daily basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 123 of 26 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>At present the Authority has no current plans to extend the route of the contracted 139 bus service to Connolly Hospital. Before the commencement of this service, the Authority had planned to include Connolly Hospital as the final destination of this route, however, Connolly Hospital did not give permission for a stop on its campus.</p> <p>The Authority ultimately chose the stop located at TUD (Technological University Dublin) in Blanchardstown as the terminus for the 139 service, as there was a dedicated layover space, a large amount of employment and educational transport demand in the environs and it was positively supported by the campus authorities.</p> <p>Please note that it is possible to interchange in Blanchardstown Shopping Centre with frequent bus services operating between the Shopping Centre and Connolly Hospital.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Bernard Durkan, T.D
------------	-----	---	---	---	---------------------

26/09/2024	119	<p>PQ Referred: 38352/24, for answer 26/09/2024, Written from - Darren O'Rourke</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 119</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he is aware of the increasing prevalence and cost of taxi plates to rent, and that, in some cases, multi-plate owners are renting plates for €7,000 a year; if he has conducted an assessment of this practice in the industry; if he has plans to reform or regulate the practice; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) sector, including SPSV licensing, is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA) under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016. I have no role in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV sector.</p> <p>At present, the NTA only issues new licences for wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs). This is to promote the availability of WAVs in Ireland's SPSV fleet nationally, not just in larger urban areas. To support the wider availability of WAVs, the Department has funded the WAV grant scheme annually since 2014, to provide financial support towards the acquisition or conversion of suitable vehicles to operate as WAVs in the SPSV fleet. It is the NTA who administers the wheelchair accessible vehicle grant scheme.</p> <p>It is also an option for a person who holds a valid SPSV driver licence, issued by An Garda Síochána, to rent a suitable vehicle. The person providing the rental package must: be the registered owner of the vehicle licensed in his/her name and must provide appropriate insurance for the period of the rental; or be entitled to use the vehicle as an SPSV for a minimum period of 12 months. provide appropriate insurance for the period of the rental ensure that the person driving is fully licensed to drive the vehicle as an SPSV, keep records of the name, address and contact number of each person driving the SPSV and their SPSV driver licence details; and retain these records and make them available for inspection by the NTA on request.</p> <p>70% of vehicles licenced are owned and driven by the same person, with the remaining 30% of the fleet operating in the rental sector. In October 2023, I appointed a representative from the SPSV rental sector to the Advisory Committee on SPSVs to ensure the perspective of drivers who rent their vehicle is reflected in Committee discussions. The Committee is an independent body established and operated under the Taxi Regulation Act 2013. Its primary function is to provide advice to NTA and to the Minister for Transport, in relation to issues relevant to small public service vehicles and their drivers.</p> <p>I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 119 of 26 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>Regulation 50 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 [S.I. No. 33/2015] permits a vehicle licence holder to rent the insured vehicle to another person. The person providing the rental must own the vehicle or be entitled to use it and be in possession of it while also being the holder of the vehicle licence, and must provide appropriate insurance for the period of the rental.</p> <p>In relation to rental costs, the NTA's Taxi Driver Research Nation Survey (March 2024) includes the most recent information collected from SPSV operators renting vehicles. The full results of the survey are published on the NTA's website. Of those operators who rent a taxi, 28% stated that the cost per week is between €200 and €250. By comparison, in October 2022, 56% of those renting stated the cost was between €150 to €200. The rental figure which the Deputy mentions appears to be more in line with those 2022 rental costs as reported to the NTA in its Taxi Driver Research (September/October 2022)</p> <p>SPSV operators are independent businesses who can decide, within the Regulations, on the business model they choose to operate. The legislative option to rent a licensed SPSV provides benefits to the industry, most notably a low cost route to entry for new drivers that may not wish to purchase their own vehicle.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Darren O'Rourke, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	--	-----------------------

26/09/2024	114	<p>PQ Referred: 38238/24, for answer 26/09/2024, Written from - Paul Donnelly</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 114</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport for an update on a direct bus route connecting the greater Dublin 15 area with the airport.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The NTA has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including BusConnects.</p> <p>BusConnects Dublin provides for a transformative programme of investments in the city's bus system including the purchase of new fleet, a network redesign and the provision of 16 Core Bus Corridors (CBCs) to provide bus priority infrastructure.</p> <p>The 16 CBCs in the BusConnects Dublin programme have been bundled into 12 schemes to assist in the planning application process. Following approval at Approval Gate 1 of the Public Spending Code for the BusConnects Dublin in 2021, the NTA submitted planning applications to An Bord Pleanála in respect of all 12 of the Core Bus Corridor schemes. An Bord Pleanála recently granted planning permission for eight of the CBC's namely, the Clongriffin, Liffey Valley, Ballymun/Finglas, Belfield/Blackrock, Blanchardstown, Swords, Ringsend and Lucan to City Centre CBCs. Legal proceedings are ongoing in relation to four of these schemes, including the Blanchardstown to city centre CBC, which serves the Dublin 15 area, and the Swords CBC which serves the airport. The NTA are considering how best to respond to these legal challenges.</p> <p>In the short term, I am pleased to say the NTA are currently in the process of introducing significant improvements to the public transport offering at Dublin Airport as part of the continued roll-out of the BusConnects network redesign. These improvements will see new and enhanced services introduced on a phased basis over this year and into next year, improving connections between the airport and all parts of Dublin – North, South, West and the city centre. This will build on the many buses which depart the airport daily serving passengers in Dublin and across the country.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 114 of 26 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Under the BusConnects Network Redesign for Dublin, new route N8 will run between Blanchardstown and Clongriffin via Dublin Airport. It is currently anticipated that services will commence in Q1 of 2026 subject to funding and resource availability.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Paul Donnelly, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	---	---------------------

26/09/2024	113	<p>PQ Referred: 38237/24, for answer 26/09/2024, Written from - Paul Donnelly</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 113</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport for an update on Metro North; the timeline for completion, the current status and costing to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>MetroLink will be a fully segregated and mostly underground new railway line between Swords and Dublin City Centre, via Dublin Airport. It is a key project under the National Development Plan 2021-30.</p> <p>A significant milestone in the progression of the MetroLink project was cleared in July 2022, when the Minister for Transport secured approval for the project from the Cabinet under Decision Gate 1 of the Public Spending Code. This decision enabled the project to move to the planning application stage, and in September 2022 Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) submitted a Railway Order application to An Bord Pleanála.</p> <p>The Railway Order consultation period, following the submission of the Railway Order application in September 2022, provided the opportunity for stakeholders along the MetroLink route to raise concerns with the project. As part of the process, TII reviewed submissions, constructively engaged with stakeholders on their concerns, developed mitigations and prepared responses to the submissions received. This includes submissions made by other State agencies. The statutory planning consultation for the project closed in January 2023.</p> <p>An Bord Pleanála commenced an Oral Hearing in relation to MetroLink on February 19th, which concluded on March 28th. This process allowed planning authorities, prescribed bodies (Office of Public Works, Dublin Airport etc.), elected representatives and observers such as Trinity College Dublin to share their views on the project.</p> <p>TII engaged constructively with all parties as part of the Oral Hearing. Where possible, following engagement, TII has provided An Bord Pleanála with conditions agreed by both parties aimed at addressing their specific concerns. Following the Oral Hearing an additional round of public consultation is taking place from 19th August to 8th October.</p> <p>Another key milestone was reached in June this year when Sean Sweeney was announced as the Project Director for MetroLink. Mr Sweeney has held leadership roles on major infrastructure projects in Australia, New Zealand and the US.</p> <p>Dependent on the outcome of the planning process, construction of MetroLink is earmarked to commence over the coming years with a view to operation by the mid-2030s.</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 113 of 26 September last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The MetroLink Preliminary Business Case was approved by Cabinet in July 2022. This Decision Gate 1 approval in principle under the Public Spending Code enabled the project to move to planning application stage.</p> <p>As part of the planning and development of the MetroLink Project, a Railway Order application was submitted to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) in September 2022 by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). ABP determined that an Oral Hearing on the project would be required, and this commenced on 19 February 2024 and concluded on Thursday 28 March 2024. On 26 April 2024 ABP wrote to TII requesting further information in relation to any modifications proposed to the Draft Order Book of Reference and TII submitted an updated Book of Reference on 12 June 2024. As part of the Oral Hearing process additional documents were submitted and ABP advised that it would request a further consultation period for the project to allow consultation on any new or amended information. The formal request by ABP was received by TII on 1 July 2024 requesting that documents submitted during the oral hearing be published for further consultation. Public consultation commenced on the 19 August 2024 and will remain open until the 8 October 2024.</p> <p>We therefore do not have certainty on when a determination by ABP of the MetroLink Railway Order application will be made.</p> <p>On 25 June 2024 it was confirmed that, Sean Sweeney, was appointed Project Director of MetroLink. This appointment was made after a competitive and international recruitment process, led by TII, to recruit an individual with the relevant skills and experience for this role. Sean Sweeney commenced in his role as MetroLink Project director on 16 September 2024.</p> <p>In parallel, the procurement strategy is being developed as part of the submission of pre-tender approval documents required under Approval Gate 2 of the Infrastructure Guidelines.</p> <p>Given the uncertainty around the ABP approval dates, it is not possible to provide a definitive dates for construction delivery or completion as the commencement date for construction is dependent upon the completion by ABP of the Railway Order application process, achievement of an enforceable Railway Order and approval of the Final Business case post tender as part of Approval Gate 3 (AG3) as required under the Infrastructure Guidelines.</p> <p>What can be confirmed is that it is expected that, allowing for the</p>	Paul Donnelly, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	---	---------------------

		<p>responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including, in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), MetroLink.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>scale of the procurement process, the main construction work on MetroLink would commence about 2 years after an enforceable Railway Order is obtained, subject to Government approval at AG3.</p> <p>The overall expenditure on the MetroLink Programme, to develop all necessary designs and planning documentation, for the period January 2016 to August 2024 inclusive, totals €184m.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	
--	--	--	---	--

01/10/2024	110	<p>PQ Referred: 39196/24, for answer 01/10/2024, Written from - Imelda Munster</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 110</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport his views on the reduction of morning rail services from Drogheda to Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy, overall funding in relation to public transport, and corporate governance of transport operators including Irish Rail.</p> <p>The issue raised by the Deputy is a matter for Irish Rail in conjunction with the National Transport Authority. Therefore, I have referred the Deputy's question to Irish Rail and the National Transport Authority for direct response to the Deputy.</p> <p>Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 110 of 01 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Please note that Irish Rail issued a statement on the 03 October in respect of morning rail services where it stated that morning Connolly route services will revert to pre 26 August pattern to address punctuality issues, with minor time changes to accommodate extra services. The statement can be read in full by clicking the link below. The revised timetable is expected to be published on the Irish Rail website on the 07 October.</p> <p>https://www.irishrail.ie/en-ie/news/timetable-changes-from-monday-14th-october</p> <p>The NTA has supported Iarnród Éireann as it makes the changes to the timetable to provide a better service for customers. At no stage would Iarnród Éireann or the NTA want to reduce services but changes do have to be made to provide a more reliable service to customers.</p> <p>If you have any further queries regarding the changes from the 14 October then please contact Irish Rail directly.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Imelda Munster, T.D.
------------	-----	--	--	---	----------------------

01/10/2024	94	<p>PQ Referred: 38866/24, for answer 01/10/2024, Written from - Sean Sherlock</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 94</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the current position with a new bus service in County Kildare (details supplied); the expected start date; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Details Supplied: The new 888 rural link service from Athy to Lullymore to include Kildangan /Monasterevin and Rathangan</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and New Town Services.</p> <p>The rollout of transport services in County Kildare under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is dependent on the annual Estimates process.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new and enhanced services, including in County Kildare, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 94 of 01 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The new TFI Local Link route 888 service is currently at procurement stage. At this point, we do not have a definitive date for commencement of this service. Once the procurement process has concluded, more details will be available including timeframe for commencement.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Seán Sherlock, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	--	---------------------

01/10/2024	98	<p>PQ Referred: 38941/24, for answer 01/10/2024, Written from - Bernard J. Durkan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 98</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the reason for the reduction in the direct services on the Grand Canal Dock to Hazelhatch-Celbridge at rush hour times; if the previous direct services that were in place and working well will be reinstated given the growing population along this line using these services; if an examination will be carried out into the reason there are now up to ten-minute delays to this service in both directions at rush hour, in view of the unreliability of services since recent changes were made which are having a disastrous effect on commuters and their journey time; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy, overall funding in relation to public transport, and corporate governance of transport operators including Irish Rail.</p> <p>The issues raised by the Deputy are a matter for Irish Rail in conjunction with the National Transport Authority. Therefore, I have referred the Deputy's question to Irish Rail and the National Transport Authority for direct response to the Deputy.</p> <p>Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 98 of 01 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Please note that Irish Rail issued a statement on the 03 October in respect of morning rail services where it stated that morning Connolly route services will revert to pre 26 August pattern to address punctuality issues, with minor time changes to accommodate extra services. The statement can be read in full by clicking the link below. The revised timetable is expected to be published on the Irish Rail website on the 07 October.</p> <p>https://www.irishrail.ie/en-ie/news/timetable-changes-from-monday-14th-october</p> <p>If you have any further queries regarding the changes from the 14 October then please contact Irish Rail directly.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Bernard Durkan, T.D
------------	----	---	---	--	---------------------

01/10/2024	86	<p>PQ Referred: 38701/24, for answer 01/10/2024, Written from - Jennifer Murnane O'Connor</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 86</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if a bus service will be provided for Palatine village to facilitate travel to Carlow town; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and New Town Services.</p> <p>The rollout of transport services in County Cavan under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is dependent on the annual Estimates process.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new services, including in County Cavan, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 86 of 01 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>There is currently a once-a-week service in the area (details on www.locallinkckw.ie). I wish to confirm that there are currently no plans for a regular route that will serve Palatine Village under the Connecting Ireland Plan. This may be reviewed at a later stage of the Plan.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	<p>Jennifer Murnane O'Connor, T.D.</p>
------------	----	---	---	--	--

01/10/2024	88	<p>PQ Referred: 38723/24, for answer 01/10/2024, Written from - Jennifer Murnane O'Connor</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 88</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the status of an application for active travel (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to Active Travel. Funding is administered through the National Transport Authority (NTA), who, in partnership with local authorities, have responsibility for the selection and development of specific projects in each local authority area.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 88 of 01 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>This project involves the design and construction of a combined cycleway and footpath at Graiguecullen, Carlow. The route is approx. 600m long, commencing at the county boundary with Laois in the vicinity of the Oakley Park housing development, proceeding along Church Street, extending to the entrance to Carlow Town Park.</p> <p>Given the ramping up of Active Travel projects in recent years, and the fixed budget available to the NTA to fund these schemes, not all proposed projects can be progressed simultaneously. Because there are more projects available than can be funded, projects have to be phased to allow their construction when funding becomes available. By the NTA funding the design and development phases, this allows for a local authority to have a pipeline of projects ready for construction in addition to a number of projects at the construction stage.</p> <p>This project was funded by the NTA in 2022 to develop the feasibility and options phase as per the NTA's Project Approval Guidelines. While the project did not receive funding in 2023 or 2024 due to other funding commitments within the Carlow Active Travel Programme, it remains in a pipeline of projects to be progressed.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan, Deputy Chief Executive.</p>	<p>Jennifer Murnane O'Connor, T.D.</p>
------------	----	---	--	--	--

01/10/2024	79	<p>PQ Referred: 38550/24, for answer 01/10/2024, Written from - Peadar Tóibín</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 79</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the person, and their rank or position within the National Transport Authority or Dublin Bus, who did not make an application for the charging points for the electric buses that subsequently could not move for the lack of charging points; if there has been an investigation into the matter; and if so, when the results of the investigation will be reported.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, as Minister for Transport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of relevant bus charging points, in conjunction with Dublin Bus.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I am writing to you concerning the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 79 on 01 October last, which have been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>There hasn't been a delay in applying for electricity capacity increases in the Dublin Bus depots. Applications for additional supply have been made at the appropriate times and the application process for such supply increases have not caused any delays in the rollout of the electric bus fleet.</p> <p>It is, however, the case that some delays were experienced in the procurement of specialist contractors/suppliers of electric charging equipment. Dublin Bus were unsuccessful in awarding two contracts for the supply and installation of chargers and this did have an impact in the timing of the provision of electric bus charging points. One procurement competition had to be cancelled in 2022 due to the tenders being non-compliant with the rules of the tender competition and a second tender competition had to be cancelled in November 2023, as it was not possible for Dublin Bus to conclude a contract with the selected tenderer.</p> <p>However, various mitigation measures have been put in place to address these procurement challenges and there are now a total of 136 high-power charging guns installed in Phibsborough and Summerhill Depots to support the operation of battery-electric buses within the Dublin region. A contract is underway to install further charging equipment in Harristown Depot and additional charging guns have been ordered for Phibsborough Depot. Taken together, these additional contracts will deliver a further 90 charging guns on top of the 136 guns currently available in the Dublin depots.</p> <p>I trust that the above information clarifies the position.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan, Deputy Chief Executive.</p>	Peadar Tóibín, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	---	---------------------

02/10/2024	75	<p>PQ Referred: 39311/24, for answer 02/10/2024, Written from - Catherine Murphy</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 75</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the amount expended by the Road Safety Authority and the National Transport Authority on external communications advice or training for its senior leadership team in 2022, 2023 and to date in 2024; the external companies engaged; and the topics or the issues that the training or advices related to, in tabular form.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. In regards to the Road Safety Authority, this is a matter for the RSA and I have therefore referred the question to the Authority for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 75 of 02 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>The Authority is provided with external communications assistance and occasional strategic advice from Q4PR. The NTA has not provided communications training in recent years for members of our Senior Management team and we would seek the assistance of Q4PR if such training was required. There is an occasional request for guidance around communications on NTA projects however expenditure on such would not amount to any more than €5,000 a year in cases where it was sought.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Catherine Murphy, T.D.
------------	----	--	---	--	------------------------

02/10/2024	73	<p>PQ Referred: 39305/24, for answer 02/10/2024, Written from - Bernard J. Durkan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 73</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if an update in respect of the commencement of the W6 bus route can be provided; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, BusConnects is a transformative programme of investment in the bus system, providing better bus services across our cities. It is the largest investment in the bus system in the history of the State, and is managed by the National Transport Authority (NTA).</p> <p>New bus services in Dublin are already being delivered, with the first five phases of the Network Redesign rolled out in recent years.</p> <p>The first of these Spines—the H-Spine—launched in June 2021 and serves Howth and Malahide. The second Spine—the C-Spine serving the Lucan/Leixlip/Celbridge corridor —launched in November 2021.</p> <p>Phase 3—the Northern Orbital routes—was rolled out in May 2022, connecting Blanchardstown with the Point and Finglas with Howth Junction. Phase 4, comprising the G-Spine and Route 60 connecting Ballyfermot with the Docklands via the City Centre, was launched in October 2022.</p> <p>Phase 5a, the Western Orbitals, launched in June 2023 connecting the West of Dublin to Kildare. Phase 5b, the Southern Orbitals, was launched in November 2023 connecting the Southern and Western areas of Dublin.</p> <p>The redesign of the entire network will continue in the coming years subject to funding and driver availability.</p> <p>Overall, BusConnects will transform bus services in our cities, allowing passengers to travel more conveniently, quickly and sustainably, and I look forward to its full implementation.</p> <p>The NTA has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including BusConnects. Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's questions to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 73 of 02 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Route W6 (Maynooth – Celbridge – Newcastle – Tallaght) will replace current routes W61 and W62 when the new traffic signalling system at Hazelhatch Bridge is ready. The works are proceeding well but the date has not yet been confirmed. We will provide a commencement date for the bus service as soon as possible.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Bernard Durkan, T.D
------------	----	---	---	---	---------------------

02/10/2024	76	<p>PQ Referred: 39331/24, for answer 02/10/2024, Written from - David Stanton</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 76</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the estimated cost of putting in place a rapid bus transit system alongside the Midleton to Youghal greenway in east Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and New Town Services.</p> <p>The rollout of transport services in County Cork under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is dependent on the annual Estimates process.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new and enhanced services, including in County Cork, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 69 & 76 of 08 October and 02 October respectively, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Firstly, in outlining existing public transport connectivity, Bus Éireann operates Expressway Route 40 from Rosslare to Tralee via Youghal. Bus Éireann also operates Route 260, a PSO service, from Cork to Ardmore via Youghal.</p> <p>In terms of delivering further improvements in public transport services between Youghal, Midleton and Cork, the implementation of Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy through the BusConnects Cork Network Redesign includes the proposed bus route 31X from Youghal to Cork City Centre, via Midleton. The Cork Commuter Rail Programme also includes substantial infrastructure and service improvements, connecting Midleton with the wider network. Under Connecting Ireland, there is a proposed regional bus corridor route from Cork to Waterford via Youghal, with more frequent services on this corridor and better integration of existing services proposed to commence in the coming years. In this regard, there is a proposed regional bus corridor route No.6 (Cork to Waterford via Youghal).</p> <p>In relation to the All-Island Strategic Rail Review, a proposal to develop a single-track line between Midleton and Waterford along the South Coast was examined under as part of the Review but was not included in the recommendations for implementation.</p> <p>In relation to the Midleton to Youghal Greenway, this forms part of an inter-urban cycling corridor between Waterford and Cork and is a key priority project under the Pathfinder Programme.</p> <p>Completion of the above referenced interventions will provide for a range of sustainable transport options for travel between Youghal, Midleton and Cork.</p> <p>At this time, a rapid bus transit system alongside the Midleton to Youghal greenway is not being actively considered and as such, a feasibility study has not been undertaken, nor has an estimated cost of its provision has not been determined at this stage.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p>	David Stanton, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	--	---------------------

				Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive	
--	--	--	--	--	--

03/10/2024	73	<p>PQ Referred: 39547/24, for answer 03/10/2024, Written from - James O'Connor</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 73</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport for an update on an active travel project (details supplied); the stage the project is at; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Details Supplied: New Line project from Summerfield Cross to Pobalscoil na Trionoide, Youghal)</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to Active Travel. Funding is administered through the National Transport Authority (NTA), who, in partnership with local authorities, have responsibility for the selection and development of specific projects in each local authority area.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 73 of 03 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>The project from Summerfield Cross to Pobalscoil na Trionoide, Youghal, has received planning consent through a Section 38 (of the Road Traffic Act 2010) process, and the detailed design of the scheme has now been completed. Cork County Council are currently working on the construction tender pack, which will be issued to the market shortly. The timeframe for delivery is dependent on securing a contractor and timing the works to reduce school disturbance.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan, Deputy Chief Executive.</p>	James O'Connor, T.D.
------------	----	--	--	---	----------------------

03/10/2024	70	<p>PQ Referred: 39536/24, for answer 03/10/2024, Written from - Anne Rabbitte</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 70</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the status of active travel plans being considered for Craughwell, County Galway; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to Active Travel. Funding is administered through the National Transport Authority (NTA), who, in partnership with local authorities, have responsibility for the selection and development of specific projects in each local authority area.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Minister,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 70 of 03 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA can confirm that there are no specific Active Travel projects being considered for Craughwell, Co. Galway at this moment in time. However, should Galway County Council wish to put forward specific proposals, the NTA will consider such proposals when preparing its Active Travel allocations for 2025.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Anne Rabbitte, T.D
------------	----	---	---	---	--------------------

03/10/2024	68	<p>PQ Referred: 39504/24, for answer 03/10/2024, Written from - Darren O'Rourke</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 68</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he will provide an update on planned changes to the Bus Éireann route 103 service and schedule; if he will ensure that there is comprehensive consultation and engagement in advance of any changes; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators, in this case Bus Éireann.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 68 of 03 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>On Sunday 27 October, Bus Éireann intend to implement a number of schedule adjustments to PSO (Public Service Obligation) bus services within the curtilage of the M3 (East Meath Commuter Corridor), including Routes 103. The purpose of these timetable adjustments is to address ongoing issues with punctuality and reliability on these commuter routes, it is not planned to enhance service capacity at this time, but it is anticipated that these schedule improvements will result in more consistent and reliable services. The Authority and Bus Éireann will keep capacity on Route 103 under review following implementation of the proposed changes and look to address any subsequent capacity issues that are identified, subject to the availability of resources, including funding.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Darren O'Rourke, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	---	-----------------------

08/10/2024	76	<p>PQ Referred: 39876/24, for answer 08/10/2024, Written from - Jim O'Callaghan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 76</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the estimated full-year cost to the Exchequer of rolling out the travel assistance scheme nationally.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>Under the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for promoting the development of an integrated, accessible public transport network. The NTA works with the relevant public transport operators, for example Bus Éireann, who have responsibility for day to day operational issues, to progressively make public transport more accessible.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for accessible public transport, including the the Travel Assist Scheme, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 76 of 08 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The TFI (Transport for Ireland) Travel Assistance Scheme has been operating in the Greater Dublin Area for more than 15 years. The aim is to teach people to travel independently on public transport. Dublin Bus manage the Scheme carried out 2,142 assists in 2023.</p> <p>The NTA started funding the TFI TAS Scheme in Cork in 2022. This is managed by Bus Eireann. The Scheme was extended to Limerick in late 2023 and Waterford in 2024.</p> <p>It is hoped to extend the scheme to Galway in the coming months pending recruitment.</p> <p>Based on 2023 costs and the fact that it may be proposed to have two staff, in each county going forward, an estimated yearly cost would be in the region of €3.25 million.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Jim O'Callaghan, T.D.
------------	----	---	--	--	-----------------------

08/10/2024	74	<p>PQ Referred: 39874/24, for answer 08/10/2024, Written from - Jim O'Callaghan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 74</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the estimated full-year cost to the Exchequer of expanding the Leitrim integrated transport pilot project nationally.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including Local Link services and delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for public transport services, including in County Leitrim, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 74 of 08 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The Leitrim Pilot project was introduced during the summer of 2021 and integrated TFI (Transport for Ireland) Local Link services (both Demand Responsive and Regular Rural Services) with HSE closed services into a revamped and enhanced TFI Local Link network for County Leitrim.</p> <p>This project took a significant amount of time in planning, procurement and coordination. As such, it would not be possible to estimate the cost of rolling out this type of project throughout the country as each county would have its own demands for services and its own potential for co-ordination.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Jim O'Callaghan, T.D.
------------	----	---	--	---	-----------------------

08/10/2024	69	<p>PQ Referred: 39772/24, for answer 08/10/2024, Written from - David Stanton</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 69</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport further to Topical Issue No. 2 of 10 July 2024, the action, if any, he has taken on the proposal to carry out a feasibility study on a suggested rapid bus transit system between Midleton and Youghal in east Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and New Town Services.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new services, including in County Cork, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 69 & 76 of 08 October and 02 October respectively, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Firstly, in outlining existing public transport connectivity, Bus Éireann operates Expressway Route 40 from Rosslare to Tralee via Youghal. Bus Éireann also operates Route 260, a PSO service, from Cork to Ardmore via Youghal.</p> <p>In terms of delivering further improvements in public transport services between Youghal, Midleton and Cork, the implementation of Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy through the BusConnects Cork Network Redesign includes the proposed bus route 31X from Youghal to Cork City Centre, via Midleton. The Cork Commuter Rail Programme also includes substantial infrastructure and service improvements, connecting Midleton with the wider network. Under Connecting Ireland, there is a proposed regional bus corridor route from Cork to Waterford via Youghal, with more frequent services on this corridor and better integration of existing services proposed to commence in the coming years. In this regard, there is a proposed regional bus corridor route No.6 (Cork to Waterford via Youghal).</p> <p>In relation to the All-Island Strategic Rail Review, a proposal to develop a single-track line between Midleton and Waterford along the South Coast was examined under as part of the Review but was not included in the recommendations for implementation.</p> <p>In relation to the Midleton to Youghal Greenway, this forms part of an inter-urban cycling corridor between Waterford and Cork and is a key priority project under the Pathfinder Programme.</p> <p>Completion of the above referenced interventions will provide for a range of sustainable transport options for travel between Youghal, Midleton and Cork.</p> <p>At this time, a rapid bus transit system alongside the Midleton to Youghal greenway is not being actively considered and as such, a feasibility study has not been undertaken, nor has an estimated cost of its provision has not been determined at this stage.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	David Stanton, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	---	---------------------

08/10/2024	93	<p>PQ Referred: 40155/24, for answer 08/10/2024, Written from - Paul Murphy</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 93</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the reason his Department and associated agencies have repeatedly omitted the Royal Canal railway line from Docklands to Broombridge during assessments that preceded the current MetroLink application.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, MetroLink will be a fully segregated and mostly underground new railway line between Swords and Dublin City Centre, via Dublin Airport. It is a key project under the National Development Plan 2021-30.</p> <p>A significant milestone in the progression of the MetroLink project was cleared in July 2022, when I secured approval for the project from the Cabinet under Decision Gate 1 of the Public Spending Code. This decision enabled the project to move to the planning application stage, and in September 2022 Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) submitted a Railway Order application to An Bord Pleanála.</p> <p>An Bord Pleanála commenced an Oral Hearing in relation to MetroLink on February 19th, which concluded on March 28th. Following the Oral Hearing an additional round of public consultation is taking place from 19th August to 8th October.</p> <p>Another key milestone was reached in June this year when Seán Sweeney was announced as the Project Director for MetroLink. Mr Sweeney has held leadership roles on major infrastructure projects in Australia, New Zealand and the US.</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including, in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), MetroLink.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 93 of 08 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>MetroLink, and its predecessor Metro North, were developed as solutions to meet demand for travel along the north-central corridor of Dublin City and Suburbs, as identified in a number of successive transport plans. Its primary aim is to link the major town of Swords, Dublin Airport, Ballymun and the north inner suburbs to Dublin City Centre by a high-capacity, high-frequency, fully-segregated rail line. In developing the scheme currently before An Bord Pleanála, a range of options for developing such a rail line were examined. These were published in the 2018 "New Metro North Alignment Options Report" available at the link below;</p> <p>https://data.tii.ie/metrolink/alignment-options-study/study-1/metrolink-volume-1-main-report.pdf</p> <p>The Royal Canal Rail Line from Docklands to Broombridge does not serve demand for travel on this corridor.</p> <p>The line in question is also a functioning part of the current Irish Rail commuter rail network with 14 arrivals and 12 departures per day to and from the M3 Parkway via Broombridge. It comprises heavy rail lines built in Irish Rail Gauge which is incompatible with modern light rail lines such as Metro. Conversion of the tracks to Metro-type infrastructure would disrupt current services requiring their termination at Broombridge on a permanent basis.</p> <p>Furthermore, under DART+ West, planning consent has been granted to electrify this line and to develop a new DART/Luas interchange at Spencer Dock to replace Docklands station. As such, the line will play an enhanced role in the Dublin Transport network as part of the DART system.</p> <p>For all of the reasons above the option to use this line for MetroLink was not included.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Paul Murphy, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	--	-------------------

08/10/2024	65	<p>PQ Referred: 39753/24, for answer 08/10/2024, Written from - Steven Matthews</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 65</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the position regarding the proposed connecting Ireland route (details supplied); the actions he will take to ensure this is prioritised for funding; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Details Supplied: Roundwood – Bray Central/ Bray DART Station, Co. Wicklow. Route would also take in Laragh and Annamoe. Demand is significant in the area. Hugely underserved by public transport.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and New Town Services.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new services, including in County Wicklow, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 65 of 08 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>There is a route proposed under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan which will cover areas from Roundwood to Bray. This route is still in the planning stage and more details is expected to be available in early 2025.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Steven Matthews, T.D
------------	----	---	---	--	----------------------

08/10/2024	59	<p>PQ Referred: 39643/24, for answer 08/10/2024, Written from - Pauline Tully</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 59</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport his plans to increase funding for the National Transport Authority and Bus Éireann to enable them to increase the capacity of overprescribed bus routes such as the 109x Dublin to Cavan bus route; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>Under Budget 2024, a funding package of c. €613.463m was secured for PSO and Local Link services. This included funding for the continuation of the 20% fare reduction on PSO services, the Young Adult Card on both PSO and commercial bus services, and the 90-minute fare until the end of the year. Funding was also secured to support new and enhanced bus and rail services. More recently, under Budget 2025 funding has been secured to support fare initiatives and for the continued roll-out of new services next year, including the continuation of the BusConnects and Connecting Ireland programmes, the planned introduction of further new town services.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 59 of 08 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>On Sunday 27 of October, Bus Éireann intend to implement a number of schedule adjustments to PSO (Public Service Obligation) bus services within the curtilage of the M3 (East Meath Commuter Corridor), such as routes 103, 109, 109A, 109B, 109X, 111, 111A, 111X & NX, as well as two other routes serving North Meath, those being routes 187 & 190. The purpose of these timetable adjustments is to address ongoing issues with punctuality and reliability on these commuter routes. It is not planned to enhance service capacity at this time, but it is anticipated that these schedule improvements will result in more consistent and reliable services. The Authority and Bus Éireann will keep capacity on Route 109x under review following implementation of the proposed changes and look to address any subsequent capacity issues that are identified, subject to the availability of resources, including funding.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Pauline Tully, T.D
------------	----	---	--	---	--------------------

08/10/2024	87	<p>PQ Referred: 40021/24, for answer 08/10/2024, Written from - John Brady</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 87</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to provide details on expenditure on the MetroLink railway and metro-related projects to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, MetroLink will be a fully segregated and mostly underground new railway line between Swords and Dublin City Centre, via Dublin Airport. It is a key project under the National Development Plan 2021-30.</p> <p>A significant milestone in the progression of the MetroLink project was cleared in July 2022, when I secured approval for the project from the Cabinet under Decision Gate 1 of the Public Spending Code. This decision enabled the project to move to the planning application stage, and in September 2022 Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) submitted a Railway Order application to An Bord Pleanála.</p> <p>An Bord Pleanála commenced an Oral Hearing in relation to MetroLink on February 19th, which concluded on March 28th. Following the Oral Hearing an additional round of public consultation is taking place from 19th August to 8th October.</p> <p>Another key milestone was reached in June this year when Seán Sweeney was announced as the Project Director for MetroLink. Mr Sweeney has held leadership roles on major infrastructure projects in Australia, New Zealand and the US.</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including, in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), MetroLink.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 87 of 08 October, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The MetroLink project commenced in January 2016. Overall expenditure on the MetroLink Programme, to develop all necessary designs and planning documentation, for the period January 2016 to September 2024 inclusive, totals €191m.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	John Brady, T.D.
------------	----	--	--	--	------------------

08/10/2024	88	<p>PQ Referred: 40022/24, for answer 08/10/2024, Written from - John Brady</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 88T</p> <p>o ask the Minister for Transport to provide details of any funding related to the MetroLink railway or metro-related projects which has been written off to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, MetroLink will be a fully segregated and mostly underground new railway line between Swords and Dublin City Centre, via Dublin Airport. It is a key project under the National Development Plan 2021-30.</p> <p>A significant milestone in the progression of the MetroLink project was cleared in July 2022, when I secured approval for the project from the Cabinet under Decision Gate 1 of the Public Spending Code. This decision enabled the project to move to the planning application stage, and in September 2022 Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) submitted a Railway Order application to An Bord Pleanála.</p> <p>An Bord Pleanála commenced an Oral Hearing in relation to MetroLink on February 19th, which concluded on March 28th. Following the Oral Hearing an additional round of public consultation is taking place from 19th August to 8th October.</p> <p>Another key milestone was reached in June this year when Seán Sweeney was announced as the Project Director for MetroLink. Mr Sweeney has held leadership roles on major infrastructure projects in Australia, New Zealand and the US.</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including, in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), MetroLink.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 88 of 08 October and 02 October respectively, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Funding for Metro projects is broken into three projects, Metro West, Metro North, and MetroLink. The Railway Procurement Agency was the agency responsible for light rail projects, until it was merged with the National Roads Authority to become Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). All expenditure was through the RPA initially, and then through NTA to the RPA once NTA was established.</p> <p>The total spend on the Metro North was €166m. Approximately €6 million of that expenditure, for properties acquired as part of the project, continues to be reported on the accounts of TII. The remaining €160 million was written down as 'sunk costs' under TII's accountancy policies. The total spend on Metro West was €18.7 million on Metro West, all of which was been written off by TII in relation to their accounts. As the MetroLink project is a live project, no expenditure to date has been written off.</p> <p>While some costs have been written off within the accounts of TII, some of the data and output from this expenditure, such as geotechnical information and other survey information, continues to have a value in the progression of MetroLink and other projects.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan, Deputy Chief Executive.</p>	John Brady, T.D.
------------	----	--	--	---	------------------

08/10/2024	80	<p>PQ Referred: 39888/24, for answer 08/10/2024, Written from - Steven Matthews</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 80</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the position regarding the proposal to extend the DART to Wicklow town; the work that has been done to date to support this project; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy is aware, as Minister for Transport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding of public transport in Ireland, including in relation to the rail network. The National Transport Authority, or NTA, has statutory responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure in the Greater Dublin Area, including through the Wicklow Capacity Enhancement Study.</p> <p>Initial planning/design work is ongoing to establish the feasibility of operating an hourly DART service to/from Wicklow town and Dublin using battery-electric trains that could operate along the un-electrified section between Greystones and Wicklow.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter and the specific issues raised by the Deputy, I have referred the Deputy's questions to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 80 of 08 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA has allocated funding to Irish Rail to commence initial planning/design work to establish the feasibility of operating an hourly DART service to Wicklow town using battery electric train sets that could operate along the un-electrified section between Greystones and Wicklow. Iarnród Éireann is currently working on the development and evaluation of potential solutions to enhance capacity in the line with the aim of identifying a preferred option and it is expected that the outcome of that work will be published early next year</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Steven Matthews, T.D
------------	----	---	--	--	----------------------

08/10/2024	75	<p>PQ Referred: 39875/24, for answer 08/10/2024, Written from - Jim O'Callaghan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 75</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the estimated full-year cost to the Exchequer of extending the wheelchair-accessible vehicle taxi grant scheme to vehicles up to 8-, 10- and 12-years-old.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry, including the administration of the wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) grant scheme and the keeping of relevant SPSV statistics, is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA), under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016. I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV industry.</p> <p>Given the NTA's responsibility in this matter, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 75 of 08 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The Wheelchair Accessible Grant Scheme (WAV Grant Scheme) currently funds the purchase and conversion of WAVs which at the date of licensing must be under 6 years of age. The WAV Grant Scheme assists in 2 ways – it can be used for the purchase of a new or second-hand WAV to add to the WAV fleet or it can be used to replace an existing WAV already in the fleet.</p> <p>The NTA understands the Parliamentary Question as asking it to consider the cost of allowing older vehicles such as that which is referred to in the question, for example, aged 8, 10 and 12 years of age to be eligible for the WAV Grant Scheme. The NTA considers there to be too many unknown variables to provide any meaningful estimate; currently the lowest grant amount is €4,000, so consideration would have to be given to the level of appropriate funding for older vehicles and whether the level of funding would be sufficient to incentivise the licensing of older vehicles as WAVs; additionally it is impossible to estimate the numbers of older vehicles which could be eligible for the grant. All WAV vehicles whether grant aided or not, can be licensed up to 15 years of age.</p> <p>Full details on the grant levels can be found at the link below;</p> <p>https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/WAV24-Information-Guide-V1.3.pdf</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Jim O'Callaghan, T.D.
------------	----	---	--	--	-----------------------

09/10/2024	35	<p>PQ Referred: 40560/24, for answer 09/10/2024, Written from - Sean Sherlock</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 35</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to provide an update on the route and commencement date of the northern distributor road.</p> <p>Identical Question(s): per</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure in our cities, including the Cork Northern Distributor Multi-Modal Route.</p> <p>The proposal for the Northern Distributor Road was established in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy. It is intended that the Northern Distributor Road will include both traffic and bus lanes as well as cycling and pedestrian facilities.</p> <p>In December of 2023, the NTA approved a Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) for the project. The approval of the SAR authorised Cork City Council to proceed with the next stage of the project, namely the route selection stage.</p> <p>Cork City Council are currently working on undertaking a comprehensive route assessment process and identifying an Emerging Preferred Route which would be brought to public consultation. I understand that this route options report is progressing well and that a public consultation on the emerging preferred option could take place later this year.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 68 of 03 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>On Sunday 27 October, Bus Éireann intend to implement a number of schedule adjustments to PSO (Public Service Obligation) bus services within the curtilage of the M3 (East Meath Commuter Corridor), including Routes 103. The purpose of these timetable adjustments is to address ongoing issues with punctuality and reliability on these commuter routes, it is not planned to enhance service capacity at this time, but it is anticipated that these schedule improvements will result in more consistent and reliable services. The Authority and Bus Éireann will keep capacity on Route 103 under review following implementation of the proposed changes and look to address any subsequent capacity issues that are identified, subject to the availability of resources, including funding.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Seán Sherlock, T.D.
------------	----	---	--	---	---------------------

09/10/2024	29	<p>PQ Referred: 40410/24, for answer 09/10/2024, Written from - John Paul Phelan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 29</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to provide further details of his Department's plans announced in Budget 2025 relating to 'investing in electric and hybrid-electric busses, and in charging infrastructure at depots', including the scale of funding to be provided.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the public transport fleet. Further details on the allocation of the Department's resources, including investment in public transport, will be set out, as usual, in the Revised Estimates Volume later this year.</p> <p>The Government is committed to the decarbonisation of the public transport sector in line with the Climate Action Plan. No new diesel-only buses have been purchased for urban public service obligation bus fleets since July 2019, as set out in the National Development Plan 2018-2027. The transition to a zero-emission urban bus fleet is currently programmed to take up until 2035, based on replacement of non-zero-emission buses as they reach the end of their efficient service lives.</p> <p>100 double-deck electric buses have been accepted into the Dublin Bus fleet, with more than 90 of these currently in service. Full deployment of these buses is dependent on bus schedule changes. Additionally, 34 double-deck electric buses entered service in Limerick earlier this year.</p> <p>Electric buses produce no tailpipe carbon emissions and offer reduced interior and exterior noise levels compared to diesel buses. This transition to electric buses will result in cleaner air and less noise pollution in areas where the buses are operating, while also providing a quieter journey for passengers.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 29 of 09 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>In 2025, the NTA intends to continue the transition of the urban public bus fleet to low- and zero-emission buses.</p> <p>There are currently 278 low-emission buses and approximately 150 zero-emission buses in operation, and the latter number will increase further during the remainder of 2024 and during 2025.</p> <p>It is currently expected that a minimum of 32 new double-deck battery-electric buses will be purchased by the NTA during 2025 and that a minimum of 60 additional charging guns will be brought on stream during 2025 in order to support the operation of battery-electric buses in Dublin and Limerick.</p> <p>In addition, work will continue on the delivery of further battery-electric bus charging infrastructure in Galway, Dublin and Cork, as well as in Sligo and several other towns.</p> <p>The NTA has made a 2025 budget submission to the Department of Transport within the past few months that reflects the anticipated investments described above, but the 2025 allocation to the NTA will only be finalised later this year.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	John Paul Phelan, T.D.
------------	----	--	---	--	------------------------

09/10/2024	26	<p>PQ Referred: 40396/24, for answer 09/10/2024, Written from - Mairéad Farrell</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 26</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to provide an update on the provision of evening bus services between Galway city and Loughrea; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 26 of 09 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA have agreed funding for this route and we have agreed with Local Link Galway to go to tender, following agreement on the finalised timetable.</p> <p>We currently anticipate that the 439 Loughrea Route is due to go to tender in Q4 of this year.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Mairéad Farrell, T.D
------------	----	---	---	--	----------------------

09/10/2024	25	<p>PQ Referred: 40390/24, for answer 09/10/2024, Written from - Rose Conway-Walsh</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 25</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if the National Transport Authority's once-off grant scheme for rural transport, which ended in 2020, will be reinstated; if there are any other funding streams to alleviate a gap in transport that could lead to social exclusion or undue hardship for individuals and groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including TFI Local Link services and the rollout of services under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan.</p> <p>As with all plans or schemes, any additional funding would be subject to the annual Budgetary and Estimates process.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for public transport services in County Mayo, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 25 of 09 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The Community Once Off Fund was provided to Transport Coordination Units (TCUs) for the provision of once off non regular passenger transport for individual groups or events up until 2020.</p> <p>Since 2020 the National Transport Authority (NTA) has focussed on continued investment in the development of the open public transport network across rural Ireland with the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan launched in 2022. The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan continues to make public transport more accessible for people in towns and villages across the country in a number of ways by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding new high-frequency services; • Enhancing existing services; and • Providing improved connectivity to the wider transport network. <p>These improvements are creating a more effective and integrated system, which brings people in rural areas to where they want to go, though the development of the open public transport network.</p> <p>At this time the reintroduction of the Community Once Off Fund is not envisaged but instead a more beneficial and long lasting investment in the TFI (Transport for Ireland) Local Link network to enable people across rural Ireland access more services and locations.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Rose Conway-Walsh, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	---	-------------------------

15/10/2024	177	<p>PQ Referred: 41331/24, for answer 15/10/2024, Written from - Seán Canney</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 177</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the progress that has been made in recent months on the provision of new public transport facilities from Loughrea via Oranmore to Galway; when the tendering process will conclude; how long after the conclusion of that process will services be in place; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and New Town Services.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new and enhanced services, including in County Galway, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 177 of 15 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>We have agreed funding for this route and we have agreed with Local Link Galway to go to tender.</p> <p>We currently anticipate that the TFI Local Link 439 evening service will go to tender before the end of 2024. We have no definitive timeframe for commencement of services following the tender. However, it will be commenced as soon as is operationally feasible.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Seán Canney, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	---	-------------------

15/10/2024	168	<p>PQ Referred: 41137/24, for answer 15/10/2024, Written from - Gary Gannon</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 168</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if his Department is aware of the number 11 bus route's critical role in serving the elderly population and students in Dublin central (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Details Supplied: Many constituents have expressed concern that discontinuing this service would severely impact their mobility and access to essential services. Given the community's previous successful campaigns to retain this route, what measures will be taken to ensure that transportation options align with the needs of residents in the area,</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport .The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including BusConnects Dublin.</p> <p>The query raised by the Deputy is an operational matter for the NTA. I have, therefore, referred the Deputy's question to the company for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 168 of 15 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA agrees that public transport including bus services are of critical importance for older people, for students and for the community as a whole.</p> <p>This section of route 11 is being replaced as part of the E-Spine changes within the overall redesign of Dublin's bus network. New routes E1, E2 and 19 will serve the Ballymun Road corridor. Routes E1/E2 will provide a combined service every five minutes (every four minutes in the peaks) linking directly with the City Centre and onwards to UCD, Dún Laoghaire and Bray. The role of route 19 was originally to have been maintaining service for certain stops and certain direct links, but at an hourly frequency. It has since been upgraded to run every 20 minutes (and every 10 minutes at peak times over the busiest section). It will provide, for the first time, a direct bus link for the Ballymun Road with Dublin Airport, including special journeys very early in the morning to support those working shifts at the Airport. It will terminate at Parnell Square, but free interchange is available there within 100metres or less with many other buses, and with the nearby Luas Green Line at Parnell and Dominick Street stops.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Gary Gannon, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	--	-------------------

15/10/2024	165	<p>PQ Referred: 41107/24, for answer 15/10/2024, Written from - Sean Sherlock</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 165</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the number of bus shelters currently under consideration for installation in the Cork area; and the location and cost of each, in tabular form.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of bus stops/shelters nationally.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 165 of 15 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>The NTA has been engaging with local authorities throughout the country in recent months in relation to the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme, whereby funding will be provided by the NTA to each local authority to progress the upgrade of bus stop facilities within its area of responsibility.</p> <p>The output of this engagement will be an agreed multi-annual programme of works to upgrade bus stop facilities that is intended to include the provision of new shelters at appropriate locations.</p> <p>In the case of Cork City and County Council, this programme of works has not yet been fully agreed and further engagement is planned in the coming weeks.</p> <p>In addition, the NTA is currently tendering for a new bus shelters contract that will facilitate the supply and/or installation of new bus shelters as part of the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme.</p> <p>While the NTA has not yet been provided with a capital allocation for 2025, we hope to be in a position to fund this this Bus Stop Enhancement Programme at a similar level next year also.</p> <p>Once the available funding has been confirmed and the programme of works agreed with Cork City and County Council, it will be possible to advise as to the upgrades to bus stop facilities (including new bus shelters) that will be progressed during 2025.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Seán Sherlock, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	---	---------------------

15/10/2024	164	<p>PQ Referred: 41106/24, for answer 15/10/2024, Written from - Sean Sherlock</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 164</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the number of passengers using all public transport options in the Cork area, broken down by route, type, that is train/bus, in 2022, 2023 and to date in 2024, in tabular form.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 164 of 15 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Please find attached a spreadsheet containing the data requested. It should be noted that the 2024 figures have not been finalised and may be subject to some changes/revisions. Data is currently only available up until the end of Period 9 (8th September).</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Seán Sherlock, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	--	---------------------

15/10/2024	162	<p>PQ Referred: 41100/24, for answer 15/10/2024, Written from - Sean Sherlock</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 162</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the number of passengers using all public transport options in the Kildare area, broken down by route, type, that is train/bus for 2022. 2023 and to date in 2024, in tabular form.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 160 & 162 of 15 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>Please find attached a spreadsheet containing the data requested. It should be noted that the 2024 figures have not been finalised and may be subject to some changes/revisions. Data is currently only available up until the end of Period 9 (8th September).</p> <p>Please note that there are other rail services that can stop in Kildare, we don't currently measure station to station passenger numbers, but the Rail Census for 2023 is available here which has station boarding and alighting data.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Seán Sherlock, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	--	---------------------

15/10/2024	161	<p>PQ Referred: 41029/24, for answer 15/10/2024, Written from - Sean Sherlock</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 161</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the number of bus shelters currently under consideration for installation in the Kildare area, their locations and cost, in tabular form.</p> <p>Dail Question No: 163</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the number of bus shelters currently under consideration for installation in the Kildare area; the location and cost of each, in tabular form.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of bus stops/shelters nationally.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 161 & 163 of 15 October, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA has been engaging with local authorities throughout the country in recent months in relation to the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme, whereby funding will be provided by the NTA to each local authority to progress the upgrade of bus stop facilities within its area of responsibility.</p> <p>The output of this engagement will be an agreed multi-annual programme of works to upgrade bus stop facilities that is intended to include the provision of new shelters at appropriate locations.</p> <p>In the case of Kildare County Council, this programme of works has not yet been fully agreed and further engagement is planned in the coming weeks.</p> <p>In addition, the NTA is currently tendering for a new bus shelters contract that will facilitate the supply and/or installation of new bus shelters as part of the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme.</p> <p>While the NTA has not yet been provided with a capital allocation for 2025, we hope to be in a position to fund this this Bus Stop Enhancement Programme at a similar level next year also.</p> <p>Once the available funding has been confirmed and the programme of works agreed with Kildare County Council, it will be possible to advise as to the upgrades to bus stop facilities (including new bus shelters) that will be progressed during 2025.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Seán Sherlock, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	---	---------------------

15/10/2024	160	<p>PQ Referred: 41028/24, for answer 15/10/2024, Written from - Sean Sherlock</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 160</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the number of passengers using all public transport options in the Kildare area, broken down by route, type – train/bus, for the years 2022, 2023 and to date in 2024, in tabular form.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 160 & 162 of 15 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>Please find attached a spreadsheet containing the data requested. It should be noted that the 2024 figures have not been finalised and may be subject to some changes/revisions. Data is currently only available up until the end of Period 9 (8th September).</p> <p>Please note that there are other rail services that can stop in Kildare, we don't currently measure station to station passenger numbers, but the Rail Census for 2023 is available here which has station boarding and alighting data.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Seán Sherlock, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	--	---------------------

15/10/2024	158	<p>PQ Referred: 40976/24, for answer 15/10/2024, Written from - Simon Coveney</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 158</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he has had discussions with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Bus Éireann, whose contract is up for renewal in December 2024, in relation to the performance of bus services in Cork (details supplied); if contractual obligations regarding punctuality and service delivery are not being met by Bus Éireann, the steps the NTA is taking to address the matter; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Details Supplied: Taking note that punctuality and reliability of the public bus services in Cork City (on services 206, 207, 208, 220, 220x, and 223) is being reported as very disappointing. Passengers travelling to college and work are arriving late to their destinations.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>I wish to advise the Deputy that in order to address issues with Cork Bus Services, Bus Éireann intend to introduce temporary revised timetables on five of the twenty-five Cork City Bus Services (202 / 202a, 205, 208 and 220) with effect from October 20th.</p> <p>Bus Éireann has been experiencing ongoing service issues in Cork city in recent months due to two key issues; namely driver recruitment and congestion, the combination of which has led to performance issues on certain services in the city.</p> <p>Despite Bus Éireann's extensive efforts to address the challenge of driver recruitment, including holding 18 open days in Cork so far this year, offering a €2,000 sign on bonus to D licence drivers, and extensive media and marketing campaigns, there remains a shortage of driver supply in Cork. This shortage is having a detrimental impact in service delivery in the city and resulting in a significant number of cancellations to bus services each day. Further, congestion issues and driver compliance with parking and bus lane regulations also continue to negatively impact services.</p> <p>Full implementation of BusConnects Cork will deliver over 90 kms of priority bus lanes which will significantly tackle the issue of congestion. However, in the short term, Bus Éireann continues to engage with the relevant authorities to deliver immediate measures, including enforcement of existing traffic rules, tackling illegal parking and bus stop use and the application of measures which will allow for swifter operation of Bus Éireann services.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 158 of 15 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>We note that the Minister provided a substantive response to this Parliamentary Question on the 15 October 2024. In addition, the NTA will continue to monitor the performance of Bus Éireann and apply appropriate sanctions. In addition, the NTA will liaise with Cork City Council on whether there are any short-term traffic measures that can be implemented in advance of the BusConnects Cork programme of works that could give better priority to the bus services in a heavily congested city.</p> <p>As Bus Éireann's recruitment of drivers improves, the service frequency will be restored on the routes and work will commence on improving the punctuality of the services which will require more drivers to be recruited.</p> <p>The NTA is very aware of the impact that the poor service is having on people's lives in Cork and are working with all stakeholders to resolve this poor performance as soon as possible.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Simon Coveney, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	--	---------------------

The planned timetable changes will come into effect from October 20th, with regular reviews planned. As driver headcount increases, service frequency will return to current levels on the aforementioned routes as quickly as possible.

The temporary changes on these high frequency routes are being implemented to help improve punctuality for passengers and service delivery on the routes. I am due to meet Cork City Council soon to discuss what measures can be taken, such as traffic enforcement and management in the short term.

In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.

16/10/2024	64	<p>PQ Referred: 41976/24, for answer 16/10/2024, Written from - Gary Gannon</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 64</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if his Department can provide clarification on the decision to discontinue the number 11 bus route, which serves a vital role in Drumcondra, particularly for elderly residents, as well as students attending UCD and DCU; the rationale behind the decision to cancel the route on the north side only, given that this route is essential for mobility and access to services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport .The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including BusConnects Dublin, and for decisions in relation to these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>I also want to assure the Deputy that the NTA is working closely with operators to address any service or connectivity issues arising from the roll-out of BusConnects. I understand that the NTA undertakes extensive public engagement prior to the introduction of any service changes.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 64 of 16 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA agrees that public transport including bus services are of critical importance for older people, for students and for the community as a whole.</p> <p>This section of route 11 is being replaced as part of the E-Spine changes within the overall redesign of Dublin's bus network. New routes E1, E2 and 19 will serve the Ballymun Road corridor. Routes E1/E2 will provide a combined service every five minutes (every four minutes in the peaks) linking directly with the City Centre and onwards to UCD, Dún Laoghaire and Bray. The role of route 19 was originally to have been maintaining service for certain stops and certain direct links, but at an hourly frequency. It has since been upgraded to run every 20 minutes (and every 10 minutes at peak times over the busiest section). It will provide, for the first time, a direct bus link for the Ballymun Road with Dublin Airport, including special journeys very early in the morning to support those working shifts at the Airport. It will terminate at Parnell Square, but free interchange is available there within 100 metres or less with many other buses, and with the nearby Luas Green Line at Parnell and Dominick Street stops.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Gary Gannon, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	--	-------------------

17/10/2024	90	<p>PQ Referred: 42155/24, for answer 17/10/2024, Oral from - Joan Collins</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 90</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if it is Government policy to not intervene in NTA decisions where there is a clear negative impact on both communities and on the use of public transport in an area (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Details Supplied: The NTA, despite critical community opposition, are continuing to push ahead with implementing the D route proposals and leaving the Inchicore, Bluebell area bereft of a timely service, every 10 mins or so and losing their connectivity to Thomas Street and a direct cross city service. In a survey, where 424 households responded, the 13 bus is the most used public transport with 380 of 424 respondents stating they use and half of the respondents say they will avail of the use of a car if the plan goes ahead.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 90 of 17 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The Authority has met with local residents and understands their concerns. Under the original plans, as part of the new D-Spine, an hourly bus service was planned via the Bluebell and Inchicore (Tyrconnell Road) alignment. The higher-frequency replacement D-Spine services will run via Crumlin rather than Inchicore. This set of changes is currently planned for implementation in Q4 of 2025 subject to funding and resource availability. As we did with other phases, we will conduct a review of capacity requirements for this Spine and this will take place in early 2025. Within this, the Authority will also determine the most cost-effective way of providing better frequency than that which was originally planned on this link.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Joan Collins, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	--	--------------------

17/10/2024	147	<p>PQ Referred: 42135/24, for answer 17/10/2024, Written from - Anne Rabbitte</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 147</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the plans being considered for increased bus services from Headford to Galway; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's query to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Minister,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 147 of 17 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA are planning to review the frequency of the route 456 bus service operating through Headford, Co. Galway in 2025/2026 as part of the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Anne Rabbitte, T.D
------------	-----	---	---	---	--------------------

17/10/2024	156	<p>PQ Referred: 42197/24, for answer 17/10/2024, Written from - Robert Troy</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 156</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he will examine providing a daily rural transport link to service Streamstown, County Westmeath, as currently the 819 local link service caters for Castletown-Geoghegan; and if this service could be extended to take in Streamstown.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including TFI Local Link services and the rollout of services under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for public transport services in County Westmeath, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 156 of 17 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>We have reviewed services in the area outlined in your Parliamentary Question and we have no current plans to divert the route 891 bus service to Streamstown.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Robert Troy, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	--	-------------------

17/10/2024	158	<p>PQ Referred: 42227/24, for answer 17/10/2024, Written from - Mairéad Farrell</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 158</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he is committed to making public transport in rural areas accessible to passengers with mobility issues; the improvements he is making in that regard; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>Under the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for promoting the development of an integrated, accessible public transport network.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for accessible public transport, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 158 of 17 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The accessibility of a public transport system is made up of the vehicles used, bus stops and services provided. For rural Ireland the following is worth noting;</p> <p>Rural Transport is generally provided by Local Link though some services through rural areas may also be provided by Bus Éireann, Go Ahead Ireland and Commercial Bus Operators (CBOs). The vehicles used on Local Link scheduled services are 95% wheelchair accessible and all the PSO (Public Service Obligation) fleet is accessible. The 15 Local Offices also organise Demand Responsive Services (DRS) which are bespoke to the needs of the community. There are approximately 1,350 of DRS services carried out annually. It is a requirement for permanent contracts that they be carried out with wheelchair accessible vehicles.</p> <p>In terms of Bus Stops. The NTA are working with the Local Authorities to provide funding to upgrade bus stops throughout the country. This funding has also been used to install wheelchair accessible bus stops suitable for use by high floor coaches with wheelchair lifts.</p> <p>There is a list of towns where most have had 2 stops installed. The towns are prioritised based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Population greater than 5,000 Ø Population greater than 1,000 Ø Other locations requested by the Local Authority. Ø Bus stations <p>There is funding available for Local Authorities to upgrade bus stops in general. This may include installation of seating at bus stops and if suitable, the installation of bus stop shelters.</p> <p>Regarding bus services. The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan aims to increase public transport services and increase connectivity between towns and villages across Ireland, particularly in rural Ireland. Since 2022, nearly 120 new or enhanced services have been implemented nationwide. The Connecting Ireland Plan is a multi-year programme with more new or enhanced services planned in the coming years subject to funding and resource availability.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p>	Mairéad Farrell, T.D
------------	-----	---	---	---	----------------------

				<p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	
--	--	--	--	--	--

17/10/2024	174	<p>PQ Referred: 42372/24, for answer 17/10/2024, Written from - Bernard J. Durkan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 174 To ask the Minister for Transport the extent to which he has continued to evaluate rural transport requirements, with a view to bringing transport to persons rather than forcing persons to converge on towns and villages as the population increases; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and New Town Services.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new and enhanced services, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 174 of 17 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is a major public transport initiative developed by the National Transport Authority (NTA) with the aim of increasing connectivity, particularly for people living outside our major towns and cities. The plan aims to improve mobility in rural areas by providing frequent and affordable transport services that offer freedom to travel and sustainable transport connections. As part of the work being undertaken under Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan, the Authority intends to trial non-conventional public transport services in areas less suited to the operation of a regular scheduled bus. This work is currently under development and could include the development of further Demand Responsive services currently operated as part of Local Link services.</p> <p>More information regarding Connecting Ireland can be found at the following link;</p> <p>https://www.nationaltransport.ie/connecting-ireland/</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Bernard Durkan, T.D
------------	-----	---	--	--	---------------------

17/10/2024	151	<p>PQ Referred: 42140/24, for answer 17/10/2024, Written from - John Brady</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 151</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the average fare paid on intracity public transport journeys (for example, from Dublin to Galway), broken down by passenger type (student, adult, pensioner, and so on) and mode of transport (bus, tram, train, and so on); and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. However, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the regulation of fares charged to passengers in respect of public transport services provided under public service obligation (PSO) contracts.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the Authority for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 150 & 151 of 17 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>Please see table below in response to Parliamentary Questions 150 & 151 of 17 October.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1620 520 2377 680"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Intercity Route Average Fare - 2024 (Period 7-10)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Passenger Type</th> <th>Train (Irish Rail)</th> <th>Bus (Bus Éireann)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Adult</td> <td>€14.93</td> <td>€10.23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Child</td> <td>€5.67</td> <td>€5.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student</td> <td>€6.56</td> <td>€4.82</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Assumptions and Constraints:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The above PSO intercity route average fare is calculated for the period starting from 2024 P7 to 2024 P10, as there was a slight increase in PSO fares from 24th June 2024. 2. The above is only provided for state subsidised services and excludes commercial licensed services. 3. Intercity services subsidised by the state are mainly rail services with very limited number of routes operated by Bus Éireann. Most intercity bus services are operated on a commercial basis. <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Intercity Route Average Fare - 2024 (Period 7-10)			Passenger Type	Train (Irish Rail)	Bus (Bus Éireann)	Adult	€14.93	€10.23	Child	€5.67	€5.20	Student	€6.56	€4.82	John Brady, T.D.
Intercity Route Average Fare - 2024 (Period 7-10)																				
Passenger Type	Train (Irish Rail)	Bus (Bus Éireann)																		
Adult	€14.93	€10.23																		
Child	€5.67	€5.20																		
Student	€6.56	€4.82																		

17/10/2024	150	<p>PQ Referred: 42139/24, for answer 17/10/2024, Written from - John Brady</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 150</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the average fare paid on intercity public transport journeys, broken down by passenger type (student, adult, pensioner, and so on) and mode of transport (bus, tram, train, and so on); and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. However, I am not involved in the day-to-day operation of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the regulation of fares charged to passengers in respect of public transport services provided under public service obligation (PSO) contracts.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the Authority for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 150 & 151 of 17 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>Please see table below in response to Parliamentary Questions 150 & 151 of 17 October.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1605 516 2395 684"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Intercity Route Average Fare - 2024 (Period 7-10)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Passenger Type</th> <th>Train (Irish Rail)</th> <th>Bus (Bus Éireann)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Adult</td> <td>€14.93</td> <td>€10.23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Child</td> <td>€5.67</td> <td>€5.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student</td> <td>€6.56</td> <td>€4.82</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Assumptions and Constraints:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The above PSO intercity route average fare is calculated for the period starting from 2024 P7 to 2024 P10, as there was a slight increase in PSO fares from 24th June 2024. 2. The above is only provided for state subsidised services and excludes commercial licensed services. 3. Intercity services subsidised by the state are mainly rail services with very limited number of routes operated by Bus Éireann. Most intercity bus services are operated on a commercial basis. <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Intercity Route Average Fare - 2024 (Period 7-10)			Passenger Type	Train (Irish Rail)	Bus (Bus Éireann)	Adult	€14.93	€10.23	Child	€5.67	€5.20	Student	€6.56	€4.82	John Brady, T.D.
Intercity Route Average Fare - 2024 (Period 7-10)																				
Passenger Type	Train (Irish Rail)	Bus (Bus Éireann)																		
Adult	€14.93	€10.23																		
Child	€5.67	€5.20																		
Student	€6.56	€4.82																		

17/10/2024	155	<p>PQ Referred: 42178/24, for answer 17/10/2024, Written from - Mairéad Farrell</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 155</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the current cost of installing a new bus shelter at a bus stop that previously did not have one; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of bus stops/shelters nationally.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I am writing to you concerning the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 155 of 17 October last.</p> <p>Typically, the installation of a bus shelter will require additional preparatory bus shelter enabling works, such as improved accessibility, the upgrading of footpaths and / or roads, in addition to the relocation of underground services. The scale and extent of these works can vary significantly depending on the condition of the receiving environment. Depending on the type and configuration of the shelter being installed, in addition to the scope of the supporting enabling works, the average cost for the installation of a bus shelter at a stop location, can range between €8,300 and €25,660.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Mairéad Farrell, T.D
------------	-----	---	--	--	----------------------

17/10/2024	76	<p>FW: PQ Referred: 41629/24, for answer 17/10/2024, Oral from - Éamon Ó Cuív</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 76</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the progress made during his tenure of office with progressing the re-opening of the Western Rail Corridor from Athenry to Collooney and improving the railway line from Limerick to Athenry with the provision of extra capital funding for passing loops and longer platforms; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As committed to in the current National Development Plan 2021-2030, the reinstatement of the Western Rail Corridor was considered as part of the All-Island Strategic Rail Review. The All-Island Strategic Rail Review was undertaken by the Department of Transport in co-operation with the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland. The Review will inform the development of rail on the Island of Ireland in the coming decades to 2050, in line with net zero targets in both jurisdictions.</p> <p>The Review's Final Report was published in July 2024. The Report sets out 32 strategic recommendations to enhance and expand the rail system in Ireland and Northern Ireland up to 2050. The recommendations seek to transform the quality of the rail system to the benefit of passengers and wider society on the island, through additional track capacity, electrification, increased speeds, higher service frequencies and new routes. Included in these recommendations is the reinstatement of the Western Rail Corridor between Claremorris and Athenry, which is earmarked to commence by 2030.</p> <p>It should be noted that that individual programmes and projects referred to within the final Review Report will be advanced subject to funding and relevant approvals, as required under the Infrastructure Guidelines in Ireland.</p> <p>Assisted by the European Investment Bank (EIB) Advisory Services, the Department of Transport and Department for Infrastructure, and agencies north and south, are working to progress the Report's recommendations in the years ahead. This includes a more detailed identification of rail priorities to pursue over the next decade. Progress in following-up on the Rail Review will be reported on as appropriate through the North South Ministerial Council.</p> <p>In relation to the rail line from Limerick to Athenry, I understand that Iarnród Éireann have received funding from the National Transport Authority (NTA) for the Ennis Line Capacity Enhancement project which aims to increase operational capacity on the line between Limerick and Athenry. A consultant has been appointed and the project is progressing, with an Emerging Preferred Option expected in first half of 2025.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter and the specific issue raised by the Deputy, I have referred the Deputy's questions to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 76 of 17 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>We note that the Minister provided a substantive response to this Parliamentary Question on the 17 October 2024.</p> <p>We do wish to add that the NTA are currently funding Iarnród Éireann to produce both a feasibility study and options selection report related to capacity improvements on the Ennis Line. This work is currently expected to be completed in Q1 of 2025.</p> <p>In addition, Iarnród Éireann are currently preparing a funding application for submission to the NTA in relation to a new project specifically related to the extension of platforms on the Ennis Line.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D.
------------	----	---	--	--	--------------------

17/10/2024	99	<p>FW: PQ Referred: 42055/24, for answer 17/10/2024, Oral from - John Brady</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 99</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the plans to upgrade the Dublin to Rosslare line, and for the electrification of the line to Wicklow town; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding of public transport in Ireland, including in relation to the rail network. The National Transport Authority, or NTA, has statutory responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure in the Greater Dublin Area, including the Wicklow Capacity Enhancement Study.</p> <p>The potential extension of DART services southwards to Wicklow is included as an objective in the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042, which was adopted last year. Initial planning/design work is currently ongoing to establish the feasibility of operating an hourly DART service to/from Wicklow town using battery electric train sets that could operate along the un-electrified section between Greystones and Wicklow.</p> <p>Modelling undertaken by the NTA for the DART+ Programme related to facilitating increased services on the Rosslare line, and to achieve maximum capacity in the Greater Dublin Area, includes an option that would see Rosslare services interchanging at Wicklow or Greystones to connect seamlessly to DART services into the heart of Dublin.</p> <p>This was an infrastructural modelling exercise, and the NTA have advised that no decision has yet been made to alter services on the Rosslare line on this basis.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter and the specific issues raised by the Deputy, I have referred the Deputy's questions to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 99 of 17 October 2024 last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>The NTA has allocated funding to Irish Rail to commence initial planning/design work to establish the feasibility of operating an hourly DART service to Wicklow town using battery electric train sets that could operate along the un-electrified section between Greystones and Wicklow. Under this arrangement, one DART per hour arriving at Greystones would be a battery/electric train set, which would be able to continue further south along the un-electrified line and terminate at Wicklow town train station. Instead of the current train pattern, the above DART extension arrangement would allow an hourly DART service from Wicklow town into Dublin City Centre, significantly enhancing the train service to and from Wicklow town. South of Wicklow, the provision of a diesel train shuttle service between Rosslare and Wicklow would provide the potential for a much more frequent train service along the southern sections of the South East Line. With an hourly DART running from Wicklow Station, the connecting shuttle service could be timetabled to conveniently connect to the DART service, minimising time delays.</p> <p>Overall, the above arrangements offer the potential for a much higher level of train service to operate on the South East line, which would provide substantial benefits to train passengers along this line. No decisions have yet been made to alter services on the Rosslare line. At a later stage when infrastructure proposals are finalised and in development, detailed train operating timetables will be prepared. There will be a public consultation process undertaken at the relevant stage in relation to any new timetabling proposals.</p> <p>In relation to the infrastructure plans, it is intended that there will be a public consultation on the proposals between Bray and Greystones early next year, with a separate public consultation on the Greystones to Wicklow proposals later in the year when they are further developed.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	John Brady, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	--	------------------

17/10/2024	83	FW: PQ Referred: 41980/24, for answer 17/10/2024, Oral from - Duncan Smith	<p>Dail Question No: 83</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he will prioritise funding to increase track capacity on the northern line from two to four tracks; his best estimate on when this can be delivered; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>I am pleased to advise the Deputy that potential capacity enhancements on the Northern rail line are being examined as part of a study being undertaken by Iarnród Éireann and funded by the EU under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).</p> <p>Separately, the All-Island Strategic Rail Review has been undertaken by the Department of Transport in Ireland in co-operation with the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland. The final Report of the Review was published in July 2024. The Review informs the development of rail on the Island of Ireland in the coming decades to 2050, in line with net carbon zero targets in both jurisdictions, and includes the potential construction of a new railway on the M1 corridor as well as four-tracking proposals for the Northern line. However, no decision has been made on these projects which would be subject to separate funding and relevant approvals, as required under the Infrastructure Guidelines.</p> <p>Assisted by the European Investment Bank (EIB), my Department and Department for Infrastructure and agencies north and south are already working to progress the Review's recommendations, maintaining momentum. This includes a more detailed identification of rail priorities to pursue over the next decade. Further information on this work will be available later this year, and progress will be reported on as appropriate through the North South Ministerial Council.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter and the specific issues raised by the Deputy, I have referred the Deputy's questions to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 83 of 17 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>We note that the Minister provided a substantive response to this Parliamentary Question on the 17 October 2024. As such, the NTA has nothing further to add other than to state that Irish Rail are leading the study regarding track capacity enhancements on the Northern Line.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan, Deputy Chief Executive.</p>	Duncan Smith, T.D.
------------	----	--	--	---	--------------------

22/10/2024	208	<p>PQ Referred: 43008/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Michael Fitzmaurice</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 208</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the cost of the new bus shelter recently constructed in Carrick-on-Shannon, County Leitrim; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of bus stops and bus shelters.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 208 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA was not involved in, and did not fund, the provision of the new bespoke bus shelter at bus shelter recently constructed in Carrick-on-Shannon, County Leitrim. It is understood that this installation is part of a larger street scape enhancement project, the Carrick-on-Shannon Destination Town scheme, and that these works were carried out by Leitrim County Council with part funding provided by Failte Ireland.</p> <p>The NTA were requested by Leitrim County Council to remove the existing shelter which had been at this location, which was duly done following the Council's request.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Michael Fitzmaurice, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	--	---------------------------

22/10/2024	205	<p>PQ Referred: 42982/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Pádraig O'Sullivan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 205</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport for an update on the Cork city northern transport project; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, the proposal for the Northern Distributor Road was established in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy. It is intended that the Northern Distributor Road will include both traffic and bus lanes as well as cycling and pedestrian facilities. In December of 2023, the National Transport Authority (NTA) approved a Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) for the project. The approval of the SAR authorised Cork City Council to proceed with the next stage of the project, namely the route selection stage.</p> <p>Cork City Council are currently working on undertaking a comprehensive route assessment process and identifying an Emerging Preferred Route which would be brought to public consultation. I understand that this route options report is progressing well and that a public consultation on the emerging preferred option could take place later this year.</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The NTA has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure in our cities, the Cork Northern Distributor Multi-Modal Route.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 205 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>As noted in the Minister's reply, Cork City Council had been undertaking a comprehensive route assessment process to identify an Emerging Preferred Route for the proposed Cork Northern Distributor Multi-Modal Route which would be brought to public consultation. Since that reply has issued, the City Council has completed their options assessment and provided it to the NTA for review in line with the procedures set out in the Infrastructure Guidelines.</p> <p>The NTA expects to complete its review in a few weeks and, subject to no additional work being required, the Council should be in a position to commence a public consultation process on the proposal early in the New Year.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Padraig O'Sullivan, T.D.
------------	-----	--	--	--	--------------------------

22/10/2024	175	<p>PQ Referred: 42571/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Réada Cronin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 175</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to provide an update on plans to electrify the rail line between Kildare town and Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure in the Greater Dublin Area, including the DART+ Programme and its constituent projects.</p> <p>As part of the DART+ Programme, the DART+ South West project will provide an electrified and more frequent rail service to passengers between Hazelhatch and Dublin city centre. Following Government approval, a Railway Order application for the project was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in March 2023. A planning decision from An Bord Pleanála is currently awaited.</p> <p>The NTA Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Transport Strategy 2022-2042 recommends the further extension of the electrified DART network to Sallins and Naas in the longer term.</p> <p>The All-Island Strategic Rail Review was undertaken by the Department of Transport in co-operation with the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland. Following two public consultations, the Review's Final Report was published on the 31st of July 2024. The Review's Final Report sets out 32 strategic recommendations to enhance and expand the rail system in Ireland and Northern Ireland up to 2050, aligning with net carbon zero commitments in both jurisdictions. The recommendations involve the electrification of the intercity rail network, including at Kildare.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in relation to the GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042 and the DART Programme, I have referred the Deputy's questions to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 175 of 22 October 2024 last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>I note that the Minister has provided a comprehensive response to this Parliamentary Question and, accordingly, there is limited information to add to that reply. However, it should be noted that subsequent to the Minister's response, An Bord Pleanála has issued its approval to the DART+ South West Railway Order application. Notification of this approval was issued on 22nd November.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	
------------	-----	--	--	---	--

22/10/2024	201	<p>PQ Referred: 42909/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Paul Donnelly</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 201</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the amount of funding required to fully implement the remaining parts of the BusConnects Dublin Programme.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, BusConnects Dublin is a transformative programme of investment in the existing bus system, providing better bus services to more people. It is the biggest ever investment in our bus system in the history of the State.</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The NTA has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including BusConnects Dublin.</p> <p>The total cost for the BusConnects Dublin Programme as a whole was estimated as part of the Preliminary Business Case which was approved by Government at Decision Gate 1 of the Public Spending Code in 2022. This approval allowed the 12 Core Bus Corridor (CBC) schemes which to enter the planning process.</p> <p>An Bord Pleanála recently granted planning permission for eight of the CBC’s namely, the Clongriffin, Liffey Valley, Ballymun/Finglas, Belfield /Blackrock, Blanchardstown, Swords, Ringsend and Lucan to City Centre CBCs. Legal proceedings are ongoing in relation to the Clongriffin, Belfield/Blackrock, Swords and Blanchardstown schemes.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) have commenced procurement for the Liffey Valley and Ballymun/Finglas CBC schemes and the first of the CBCs is expected to enter construction in 2025.</p> <p>An updated cost estimate for each of the CBCs will be available as they advance through the procurement process and are submitted for final approval under the Infrastructure Guidelines prior to entering construction.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I am writing to you concerning the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 201 of 22 October 2024, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. Your query requested “the amount of funding required to fully implement the remaining parts of the BusConnects Dublin Programme”.</p> <p>In line with the requirements of the Infrastructure Guidelines (previously the Public Spending Code) a Preliminary Business Case was published for the overall BusConnects Dublin programme, which is available on the NTA website at the following link;</p> <p>https://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-and-investment/transport-investment/projects/busconnects/busconnects-dublin-preliminary-business-case/</p> <p>That Preliminary Business Case, which was prepared in 2022, provided an overall cost estimate for the project as set out in the table below:</p> <p>The overall total investment costs were assessed as €4.2 billion of which €1.3 billion is classified as investment that would occur in any event (such as bus replacements) – this is referred to as the “Do-Minimum”.</p> <p>Since the initiation of the programme in 2018, the amount spent to date (end of September) on BusConnects Dublin is €432m, most of which relates to continual fleet replacement – replacing life expired buses.</p> <p>I hope that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan, Deputy Chief Executive.</p>	Paul Donnelly, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	--	---------------------

22/10/2024	179	<p>PQ Referred: 42602/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Darren O'Rourke</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 179</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he will consider extending the ten-year rule for taxis not covered by the existing extension, starting with 151-registered vehicles, given the fact that they will be due for renewal in 2025 when, paradoxically, older vehicles will not; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry, including vehicle age limits for SPSVs, is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA), under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Act 2013 and 2016. I have no role in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV industry.</p> <p>Regulations made by the NTA in 2010 first established a maximum permissible age of 10 years for new standard taxis and hackneys. The ten-year rule was adopted in recognition of the need to strike a balance between achieving standards that offer the customer confidence, comfort, and safety, and allowing industry members to operate successfully.</p> <p>The Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016 require the NTA to seek to promote the provision and maintenance of quality services by small public service vehicles and their drivers. The Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 continued the age limit for taxis and hackneys as, in general, less than 10 years old and always of a condition and quality suitable to provide SPSV services.</p> <p>Wheelchair accessible taxis and wheelchair accessible hackneys can operate up to 15-years old. No maximum age is set for limousines due to the vintage nature of many of these vehicles, and the reduced mileage they do due to their ceremonial and prestigious roles.</p> <p>The NTA's extension of age limits during Covid-19 was an emergency measure of a temporary nature, taken in recognition of the particular challenges posed by the pandemic and was specifically aimed at ensuring that no operator would be required to change their vehicle while passenger demand remained low, and there was a lack suitable vehicles available for purchase.</p> <p>The 2022 Regulations amend Regulation 31 (Maximum Permissible Age Requirements) of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015. This amendment was made as an exceptional provision and contingency measure, as a result of vehicle supply issues. The Regulations also provide for a graduated return to the ten-year age limit, with vehicles whose 10-year limit was originally in 2020 or 2021 now extended to 2025; those whose original limit is in 2022 or 2023 now extended to 2026, and those whose original limit will be reached in 2024, extended to 2027.</p> <p>Given the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have referred your question to the</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 179 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The age limits applying to vehicles operated in the Small Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) industry are provided for in legislation. In this response, I have set out the relevant provisions by way of background to SPSV age limits generally, to inform in relation to the recent, temporary changes in this area. It is noted that such temporary changes have resulted in a change to certain licences' validity period. The below information explains the reasoning for this.</p> <p>Background: The Taxi Regulation Act 2003 (Suitability Inspection and Annual Licence Renewal Assessment of Small Public Service Vehicles) Regulations 2010 first established an age limit of less than 10 years old for new small public service vehicles. The Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016 require the NTA to seek to promote the provision and maintenance of quality services by small public service vehicles and their drivers. In furtherance of this, Regulation 31 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 continued the age limit for taxis and hackneys as, in general, less than 10 years old and always of a condition and quality suitable to provide SPSV services.</p> <p>Wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys are permitted to operate up to 15 years of age.</p> <p>No maximum permissible age is prescribed for limousines in recognition of both the vintage nature of many of these vehicles, and the reduced mileage undertaken by virtue of their ceremonial and prestigious roles.</p> <p>Some limited exceptions, specifically concerning vehicles associated with SPSV licences prior to the introduction of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicles) Regulations 2015, apply to these timeframes. Where such an exception is attached to a licence, the 10 year age limit does not apply and the vehicle remains eligible to be licensed until 15 years from the date of first registration.</p> <p>Age limits applied to SPSVs in different jurisdictions varies, but the age limit in Ireland is amongst the highest when compared to comparable jurisdictions. Even in those few regions where a higher age limit than Ireland exists, this is often in a city that requires a bespoke, expensive taxi vehicle – for example, in London.</p> <p>In recent years, 2 world events necessitated the introduction of temporary measures amending the permissible age regulations. The temporary measures were introduced to retain as many vehicles as</p>	Darren O'Rourke, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	---	-----------------------

		<p>NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.</p>	<p>possible in the industry while the ability to accrue revenue from the industry was curtailed.</p> <p>1. COVID-19 Temporary Measures</p> <p>In response to the very specific challenges in the SPSV industry posed by Covid-19, NTA enacted a number of emergency measures temporarily amending Regulation 31 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 in 2020 and 2021. These emergency measures extended the maximum permissible age requirements of eligible vehicles due to expire in 2020 and 2021 in response to the impact of Covid-19. All eligible vehicles were still required to successfully complete both a roadworthiness and an SPSV suitability inspection every six months, to ensure standards and quality remain at an appropriate level.</p> <p>Following ongoing impacts of Covid-19, emergency measure Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measure COVID-19) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations 2021 provided emergency COVID-19 protection to vehicles due to reach their maximum permissible age during 2022.</p> <p>2. Vehicle Supply Emergency Measures</p> <p>In late 2022, climate, energy and geopolitical challenges made it unfeasible for all end of life SPSVs to be replaced throughout the following 12-15 months.</p> <p>The factors facing licence holders for the replacement of end of life SPSVs included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global shortage of semiconductor chips, neon, nickel and palladium; • Energy rationing in Europe; • Logistics disruptions in Germany; • Covid-19 lockdowns in China; and • Vehicle Supply to Ireland. <p>A pragmatic response was required to control the impacts of matters outside of the State’s control. As a result, the NTA made an exceptional contingency provision in relation to the maximum permissible vehicle age limits of vehicles due to reach their end of life before 2025. The NTA held a public consultation inviting representations on the proposed Small Public Service Vehicle (Contingency Measure – Vehicle Supply) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations from interested parties. The period of the consultation was 19th September 2022 to 12th October 2022 inclusive. The NTA also consulted directly with the Advisory Committee on SPSVs and An Garda Síochána.</p> <p>1,938 responses were received. The vast majority of respondents (94%) agreed with the proposal. The Board of the NTA subsequently</p>	
--	--	--	--	--

				<p>approved the signing of these Regulations on the 18th November 2022. The consultation report is available to view in the Public Consultations section of the NTA website which can be accessed by clicking here.</p> <p>As a result of this measure, no licensed vehicle in the SPSV fleet at the time of enactment would be forced to leave the fleet as a result of age, before 01 January 2025. Please note that a uniform end date to the extensions was not applied, and extensions of 36 to 60 months were provided for across the differing original final operation dates of the impacted vehicles only. These extension periods reflected the impact of the circumstances of the time on the fleet and only impacted vehicles with an original final operation date between 13th March 2020 and the end of 2024.</p> <p>The NTA can confirm that no further extensions to the maximum permissible age are under consideration.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	
--	--	--	--	---	--

22/10/2024	176	<p>PQ Referred: 42574/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Réada Cronin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 176</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the plans to increase funding for rural transport links in Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including TFI Local Link services, the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and the development of New Town Services.</p> <p>I am pleased to confirm that I have secured a funding package of €652m for PSO and Local Link services next year. This includes funding to support fare initiatives and for the continued roll-out of new services, including the continuation of the BusConnects and Connecting Ireland programmes, and the planned introduction of further new town services.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new services, including in County Kildare, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 176 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA is still in discussions with the Department regarding PSO (Public Service Obligation) funding for 2025. As such, we are not yet in position to clarify what routes will be launched or enhanced under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan including for Kildare.</p> <p>Information on current routes which were launched under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan can be found at https://locallinkkildaresouthdublin.ie/.</p> <p>In addition, more information regarding Connecting Ireland can be found at the link below;</p> <p>https://www.nationaltransport.ie/connecting-ireland/</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	<p>Reada Cronin, T.D</p>
------------	-----	--	---	---	--------------------------

22/10/2024	177	<p>PQ Referred: 42575/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Réada Cronin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 177</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the plans to provide rural transport links to the Ellistown and Lackagh areas of County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including TFI Local Link services, the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and the development of New Town Services.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new services, including in County Kildare, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 177 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>We have no current plans to provide regular public transport services to Ellistown and Lackagh areas of County Kildare.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	<p>Reada Cronin, T.D</p>
------------	-----	--	--	---	--------------------------

22/10/2024	198	<p>PQ Referred: 42823/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Bernard J. Durkan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 198</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if every effort can be made to increase the capacity to the C Spine route from Dublin city centre at peak times, with particular reference to the C52 route from Ringsend to Intel, with particular reference to the ongoing public feedback that the buses are often full to capacity by the time they reach Aston Quay and unable to take any additional passengers, resulting in many being stranded indefinitely; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's query to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 198 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>On foot of your Parliamentary Question and other queries received on this matter, we will ask the operator to review capacity at this location particularly with reference to route 52.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Bernard Durkan, T.D
------------	-----	---	--	--	---------------------

22/10/2024	180	<p>PQ Referred: 42620/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Darren O'Rourke</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 180</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he will change the 167 route to serve Drumconrath, County Meath (details provided); and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's query to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 180 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>We have no current plans to reroute the 167 service through Drumconrath, County Meath. However, as part of Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan, the Authority is currently working with Local Link Louth, Meath, Fingal to procure a new bus service that will operate between Kells and Ardee, via Drumconrath.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Darren O'Rourke, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	---	-----------------------

22/10/2024	169	<p>PQ Referred: 42538/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Jim O'Callaghan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 169</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to provide first and full-year costs for the free public transport scheme to children aged 15 and under.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. However, I am not involved in the day-to-day operation of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the regulation of fares charged to passengers in respect of public transport services provided under public service obligation (PSO) contracts.</p> <p>Under Budget 2025, funding has been allocated to the Department of Transport to provide for free public transport for children aged 5 to 8 years. Free travel for all children under-fives on subsidised public transport services was introduced in 2017, and this new measure now extends that to include children aged between 5 and 8 years of age. The extension will be introduced next year, with a lead time involved to allow for the necessary technical changes required to facilitate the implementation of this change to child fares.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the Authority for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 169 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The Estimated cost (Fare Foregone) of introducing free public transport for all children aged 5 to 15 years of age range between €33.3m to €36.9m</p> <p>Assumptions and Constraints:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The above are incremental amounts i.e. these are the additional cost on top of the 20% discount which is currently being given. 2. The above range is including the estimated cost of free travel for children aged 5 to 8 years of age which was announced in the 2025 Budget. 3. The above figures relates to fare foregone only and does not include the cost of running any additional services across the modes that maybe required to meet the additional demand generated by the introduction of free travel. 4. The cost of implementation of any technical changes to the Leap Card scheme is also not included. 5. The above estimated cost (Fare Foregone) is only provided for PSO and excludes a similar provision for commercial public transport services licensed by the NTA as we would not have the breakdown in their passenger numbers. 6. The above cost range is for the year 2025. <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Jim O'Callaghan, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	--	-----------------------

22/10/2024	220	<p>PQ Referred: 43223/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Darren O'Rourke</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 220</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if it is the case that funding has been withdrawn for the pedestrian and cycling scheme in Ratoath, County Meath; the level of funding that has been withdrawn; the reason for this and the new timeline and schedule for these works to proceed; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to Active Travel. Funding is administered through the National Transport Authority (NTA), who, in partnership with local authorities, have responsibility for the selection and development of specific projects in each local authority area.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 220 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Meath County Council has a significant pipeline of active travel schemes throughout the county, many of which have now been brought through the planning and development process to the point where they are ready for construction. Meath County Council's Active Travel Grant allocation from the NTA in 2024 was €13.5m and is unlikely to increase beyond the current level at the present time.</p> <p>There has been significant construction inflation in the last 3 years, which has led to a widening gap between project costs and the funding available from the Government to deliver them. This has resulted in Meath County Council having to alter their initial project delivery timelines and prioritise certain projects to match the current allocated funding.</p> <p>This does not mean that funding has been “withdrawn” for planned projects. The NTA funds projects on a phased basis – feasibility stage, options stage, design stage, planning consent stage, construction. Each phase that the NTA commits to is fully funded in all cases. Instead, the next phase of the project has to be aligned with the level of funding available, which may mean a later delivery than originally anticipated.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Darren O'Rourke, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	--	-----------------------

22/10/2024	178	<p>PQ Referred: 42578/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Réada Cronin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 178</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if he will provide an update on funding and timelines for the development of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure as part of the Monasterevin Market Square redevelopment project under the town centre first scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to Active Travel. Funding is administered through the National Transport Authority (NTA), who, in partnership with local authorities, have responsibility for the selection and development of specific projects in each local authority area.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 178 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA has no role in the Monasterevin Market Square redevelopment project – we understand that the scheme is being advanced under the Town Centre First programme administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development. I would therefore suggest contacting Kildare County Council on this particular matter.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	<p>Reada Cronin, T.D</p>
------------	-----	--	---	--	--------------------------

22/10/2024	184	<p>PQ Referred: 42673/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - James O'Connor</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 184</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport for an update on an active travel project (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Details Supplied: NTA footpath from Summerfield Cross, Youghal to Pobalscoil na Tríonóide, Youghal via New Line</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to Active Travel. Funding is administered through the National Transport Authority (NTA), who, in partnership with local authorities, have responsibility for the selection and development of specific projects in each local authority area.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 184 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Cork County Council have progressed the design for an intervention at Summerfield Cross which includes junction tightening, new footpaths, biodiversity buffer zones, pedestrian crossings and bus stops.</p> <p>This has received Section 38 approval and is currently going through the detailed design process with procurement of works planned before the end of the year. This is the first Phase of this scheme.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	James O'Connor, T.D.
------------	-----	--	---	---	----------------------

22/10/2024	173	<p>PQ Referred: 42560/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Réada Cronin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 173</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport his plans to improve cycling infrastructure in north Kildare to encourage more sustainable modes of transport; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to Active Travel. Funding is administered through the National Transport Authority (NTA), who, in partnership with local authorities, have responsibility for the selection and development of specific projects in each local authority area.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 221 of 05 November and 173 & 174 of 22 October last, which have been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>In response to your Parliamentary Questions, please find attached updates for Active Travel projects currently ongoing with NTA funding in South Kildare and North Kildare.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	<p>Reada Cronin, T.D</p>
------------	-----	--	---	--	--------------------------

22/10/2024	174	<p>PQ Referred: 42561/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Réada Cronin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 174</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport his plans to improve cycling infrastructure in south Kildare to encourage more sustainable modes of transport; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to Active Travel. Funding is administered through the National Transport Authority (NTA), who, in partnership with local authorities, have responsibility for the selection and development of specific projects in each local authority area.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 221 of 05 November and 173 & 174 of 22 October last, which have been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>In response to your Parliamentary Questions, please find attached updates for Active Travel projects currently ongoing with NTA funding in South Kildare and North Kildare.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	<p>Reada Cronin, T.D</p>
------------	-----	--	---	--	--------------------------

23/10/2024	61	<p>PQ Referred: 43449/24, for answer 23/10/2024, Written from - Robert Troy</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 61</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to consider broadening the remit for taxi drivers to pick wherever vacancy in peak periods; and if consideration will be given to abolishing the ten-year rule if the vehicle passes the NCT.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry, including SPSV licensing and vehicle age limits for SPSVs, is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA), under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Act 2013 and 2016. I have no role in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV industry.</p> <p>In order to obtain an SPSV driver licence, applicants must undertake the Driver Entry Test that consists of an Industry Knowledge Test and Area Knowledge Test. The Area Knowledge Test consists of 36 questions regarding the county in which the applicant wishes to be licensed and assesses an applicant's knowledge of their chosen area of operation. Drivers are licensed to operate in both their primary and secondary areas of operation and it is the driver who chooses these areas. It should be noted that licensed SPSV vehicles are not restricted to a geographical area and can be operated anywhere in the country. It is only the licensed driver that is restricted to a geographical area.</p> <p>In relation to vehicle age limits, regulations made by the NTA in 2010 first established a maximum permissible age of 10 years for new standard taxis and hackneys. The ten-year rule was adopted in recognition of the need to strike a balance between achieving standards that offer the customer confidence, comfort, and safety, and allowing industry members to operate successfully. The Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 continued the age limit for taxis and hackneys as, in general, less than 10 years old and always of a condition and quality suitable to provide SPSV services.</p> <p>Wheelchair accessible taxis and wheelchair accessible hackneys can operate up to 15-years old. No maximum age is set for limousines due to the vintage nature of many of these vehicles, and the reduced mileage they do due to their ceremonial and prestigious roles.</p> <p>The NTA's extension of age limits during Covid-19 was an emergency measure of a temporary nature, taken in recognition of the particular challenges posed by the pandemic and was specifically aimed at ensuring that no operator would be required to change their vehicle while passenger demand remained low, and there was a lack suitable vehicles available for purchase.</p> <p>The 2022 Regulations amend Regulation 31 (Maximum Permissible Age Requirements) of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015. This amendment was made as an exceptional provision and contingency measure, as a result of vehicle supply issues. The Regulations also provide for a graduated return to the ten-year age limit, with vehicles whose 10-year limit was originally in 2020 or 2021 now extended to 2025; those whose original limit is in</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 61 of 23 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>It is our understanding that the first part of your Parliamentary Question relates to licensed areas of operation for taxi drivers. However, if this is an incorrect understanding please revert for any further clarification.</p> <p>NTA wishes to clarify the following in relation to the SPSV industry and its operation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Small Public Service Vehicles (SPSVs) can be operated anywhere in Ireland and are not restricted to a specific geographical area. 2. SPSV driver licence holders can operate as taxi, hackney or limousine drivers. 3. SPSV drivers who choose to operate a taxi can only stand or ply for hire in their specified geographical area i.e. the county in which they are licenced to operate. 4. There is no limit on the number of counties drivers can apply to stand or ply for hire in save only that a driver is required to pass an area Knowledge test for each county in which they wish to stand or ply for hire in. The Area Knowledge Test is one of the two modules comprised in the SPSV Entry Test and a mark of 75% must be achieved to pass. The Area Knowledge test can be taken any number of times. 5. On the condition that a journey is prebooked, a taxi, hackney or limousine driver can operate anywhere in the country. <p>As the above shows, there is flexibility within the current operation of the SPSV industry for services to be provided in areas where demand exists; in addition, NTA's 2024 taxi user survey shows that 64% of journeys are now prebooked by telephone or online/app; as per item 5 above, SPSV drivers can operate in areas other than their licensed of operation for such journeys.</p> <p>SPSV driver licence and vehicle licence statistics are published each month by NTA on the Statistics and Legislation page of nationaltransport.ie; the figures for SPSV driver licences as at 30th September 2024 show that the number of drivers, 27,298, had surpassed March 2020 (pre Covid-19) figures by 0.3% with rank or hail entitlement in Dublin surpassing pre Covid-19 figures by 8.2% at 16,691 licences.</p> <p>In relation to the maximum permissible age of vehicles operating as SPSVs, the age limits applying to vehicles operated in the Small Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) industry are provided for in legislation. The relevant background to these age limits can be set out as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Taxi Regulation Act 2003 (Suitability Inspection and Annual 	Robert Troy, T.D.
------------	----	---	---	--	-------------------

2022 or 2023 now extended to 2026, and those whose original limit will be reached in 2024, extended to 2027. As the instigating factors around vehicle supply that resulted in the time-limited amendments to vehicle maximum permissible age are no longer present, the independent regulator for the SPSV sector, the NTA does not anticipate introducing any further age extensions.

Given the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.

Licence Renewal Assessment of Small Public Service Vehicles) Regulations 2010 first established an age limit of less than 10 years old for new small public service vehicles.

2. The Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016 require the NTA to seek to promote the provision and maintenance of quality services by small public service vehicles and their drivers. In furtherance of this, Regulation 31 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 continued the age limit for taxis and hackneys as, in general, less than 10 years old and always of a condition and quality suitable to provide SPSV services.
3. Wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys are permitted to operate up to 15 years of age.
4. No maximum permissible age is prescribed for limousines in recognition of both the vintage nature of many of these vehicles, and the reduced mileage undertaken by virtue of their ceremonial and prestigious roles.
5. Some limited exceptions, specifically concerning vehicles associated with SPSV licences prior to the introduction of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicles) Regulations 2015, apply to these timeframes. Where such an exception is attached to a licence, the 10 year age limit does not apply and the vehicle remains eligible to be licensed until 15 years from the date of first registration.

Age limits applied to SPSVs in different jurisdictions varies, but the age limit in Ireland is amongst the highest when compared to comparable jurisdictions. Even in those few regions where a higher age limit than Ireland exists, this is often in a city that requires a bespoke, expensive taxi vehicle – for example, in London.

The NTA can confirm that, while temporary measures, necessitated by 2 world events were introduced amending the permissible age regulations for SPSVs, no further extensions to the maximum permissible age, for any reason, are under consideration. For completeness, we set out hereunder the background to these temporary measures:

COVID-19 Temporary Measures

In response to the very specific challenges in the SPSV industry posed by Covid-19, NTA enacted a number of emergency measures temporarily amending Regulation 31 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 in 2020 and 2021. These emergency measures extended the maximum permissible age requirements of eligible vehicles due to expire in 2020 and 2021 in response to the impact of Covid-19 and to retain as many vehicles in the industry as possible. All eligible vehicles were still required to successfully complete both a roadworthiness and an SPSV suitability inspection every six months, to ensure standards and quality remain at an appropriate level.

				<p>Following ongoing impacts of Covid-19, emergency measure Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measure COVID-19) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations 2021 provided emergency COVID-19 protection to vehicles due to reach their maximum permissible age during 2022; and</p> <p>Vehicle Supply Emergency Measures</p> <p>In late 2022, climate, energy and geopolitical challenges made it unfeasible for all end of life SPSVs to be replaced throughout the following 12-15 months.</p> <p>The factors facing licence holders for the replacement of end of life SPSVs included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global shortage of semiconductor chips, neon, nickel and palladium; • Energy rationing in Europe; • Logistics disruptions in Germany; • Covid-19 lockdowns in China; and • Vehicle Supply to Ireland. <p>A pragmatic response was required to control the impacts of matters outside of the State’s control. As a result, NTA made an exceptional contingency provision in relation to the maximum permissible vehicle age limits of vehicles due to reach their end of life before 2025. The NTA held a public consultation inviting representations on the proposed Small Public Service Vehicle (Contingency Measure – Vehicle Supply) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations from interested parties. The period of the consultation was 19th September 2022 to 12th October 2022 inclusive. The NTA also consulted directly with the Advisory Committee on SPSVs and An Garda Síochána.</p> <p>1,938 responses were received. The vast majority of respondents (94%) agreed with the proposal. The Board of the NTA subsequently approved the signing of these Regulations on the 18th November 2022. The consultation report is available to view in the Public Consultations section of the NTA website which can be accessed by clicking here.</p> <p>As a result of this measure, no licensed vehicle in the SPSV fleet at the time of enactment would be forced to leave the fleet as a result of age, before 01 January 2025.</p> <p>It should be noted that a uniform end date to the extensions was not applied, and extensions of 36 to 60 months were provided for across the differing original final operation dates of the impacted vehicles. These extension periods reflected the impact of the circumstances of the time on the fleet and only impacted vehicles with an original final operation date between 13th March 2020 and the end of 2024.</p> <p>Current legislation prevents a vehicle aged 10 years or over being</p>	
--	--	--	--	---	--

licensed as an SPSV, and NTA is not considering any further or other amendments to this legislation.

I trust that the above is of assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne Graham
Chief Executive

23/10/2024	55	<p>PQ Referred: 43372/24, for answer 23/10/2024, Written from - Richard Bruton</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 55</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport if the concessions on taxi licence extension at the time of Covid can be applied to all taxis registered at the time that the concession was made, rather than confining the concession to those registered up to the end of 2014; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry, including vehicle age limits for SPSVs, is a matter for the independent transport regulator, the National Transport Authority (NTA), under the provisions of the Consolidated Taxi Regulation Act 2013 and 2016. I have no role in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV industry.</p> <p>Regulations made by the NTA in 2010 first established a maximum permissible age of 10 years for new standard taxis and hackneys. The ten-year rule was adopted in recognition of the need to strike a balance between achieving standards that offer the customer confidence, comfort, and safety, and allowing industry members to operate successfully.</p> <p>The Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016 require the NTA to seek to promote the provision and maintenance of quality services by small public service vehicles and their drivers. The Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 continued the age limit for taxis and hackneys as, in general, less than 10 years old and always of a condition and quality suitable to provide SPSV services.</p> <p>Wheelchair accessible taxis and wheelchair accessible hackneys can operate up to 15-years old. No maximum age is set for limousines due to the vintage nature of many of these vehicles, and the reduced mileage they do due to their ceremonial and prestigious roles.</p> <p>The NTA's extension of age limits during Covid-19 was an emergency measure of a temporary nature, taken in recognition of the particular challenges posed by the pandemic and was specifically aimed at ensuring that no operator would be required to change their vehicle while passenger demand remained low, and there was a lack suitable vehicles available for purchase.</p> <p>The 2022 Regulations amend Regulation 31 (Maximum Permissible Age Requirements) of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015. This amendment was made as an exceptional provision and contingency measure, as a result of vehicle supply issues. The Regulations also provide for a graduated return to the ten-year age limit, with vehicles whose 10-year limit was originally in 2020 or 2021 now extended to 2025; those whose original limit is in 2022 or 2023 now extended to 2026, and those whose original limit will be reached in 2024, extended to 2027. The NTA does not anticipate introducing any further maximum permissible age extensions, as the instigating factors no longer exist.</p> <p>Given the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have referred your question to the</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 61 of 23 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>It is our understanding that the first part of your Parliamentary Question relates to licensed areas of operation for taxi drivers. However, if this is an incorrect understanding please revert for any further clarification.</p> <p>NTA wishes to clarify the following in relation to the SPSV industry and its operation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Small Public Service Vehicles (SPSVs) can be operated anywhere in Ireland and are not restricted to a specific geographical area. 2. SPSV driver licence holders can operate as taxi, hackney or limousine drivers. 3. SPSV drivers who choose to operate a taxi can only stand or ply for hire in their specified geographical area i.e. the county in which they are licenced to operate. 4. There is no limit on the number of counties drivers can apply to stand or ply for hire in save only that a driver is required to pass an area Knowledge test for each county in which they wish to stand or ply for hire in. The Area Knowledge Test is one of the two modules comprised in the SPSV Entry Test and a mark of 75% must be achieved to pass. The Area Knowledge test can be taken any number of times. 5. On the condition that a journey is prebooked, a taxi, hackney or limousine driver can operate anywhere in the country. <p>As the above shows, there is flexibility within the current operation of the SPSV industry for services to be provided in areas where demand exists; in addition, NTA's 2024 taxi user survey shows that 64% of journeys are now prebooked by telephone or online/app; as per item 5 above, SPSV drivers can operate in areas other than their licensed of operation for such journeys.</p> <p>SPSV driver licence and vehicle licence statistics are published each month by NTA on the Statistics and Legislation page of nationaltransport.ie; the figures for SPSV driver licences as at 30th September 2024 show that the number of drivers, 27,298, had surpassed March 2020 (pre Covid-19) figures by 0.3% with rank or hail entitlement in Dublin surpassing pre Covid-19 figures by 8.2% at 16,691 licences.</p> <p>In relation to the maximum permissible age of vehicles operating as SPSVs, the age limits applying to vehicles operated in the Small Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) industry are provided for in legislation. The relevant background to these age limits can be set out as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Taxi Regulation Act 2003 (Suitability Inspection and Annual 	Richard Bruton, T.D.
------------	----	--	--	--	----------------------

		<p>NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.</p>	<p>Licence Renewal Assessment of Small Public Service Vehicles) Regulations 2010 first established an age limit of less than 10 years old for new small public service vehicles.</p> <p>2. The Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016 require the NTA to seek to promote the provision and maintenance of quality services by small public service vehicles and their drivers. In furtherance of this, Regulation 31 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 continued the age limit for taxis and hackneys as, in general, less than 10 years old and always of a condition and quality suitable to provide SPSV services.</p> <p>3. Wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys are permitted to operate up to 15 years of age.</p> <p>4. No maximum permissible age is prescribed for limousines in recognition of both the vintage nature of many of these vehicles, and the reduced mileage undertaken by virtue of their ceremonial and prestigious roles.</p> <p>5. Some limited exceptions, specifically concerning vehicles associated with SPSV licences prior to the introduction of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicles) Regulations 2015, apply to these timeframes. Where such an exception is attached to a licence, the 10 year age limit does not apply and the vehicle remains eligible to be licensed until 15 years from the date of first registration.</p> <p>Age limits applied to SPSVs in different jurisdictions varies, but the age limit in Ireland is amongst the highest when compared to comparable jurisdictions. Even in those few regions where a higher age limit than Ireland exists, this is often in a city that requires a bespoke, expensive taxi vehicle – for example, in London.</p> <p>The NTA can confirm that, while temporary measures, necessitated by 2 world events were introduced amending the permissible age regulations for SPSVs, no further extensions to the maximum permissible age, for any reason, are under consideration. For completeness, we set out hereunder the background to these temporary measures:</p> <p>COVID-19 Temporary Measures</p> <p>In response to the very specific challenges in the SPSV industry posed by Covid-19, NTA enacted a number of emergency measures temporarily amending Regulation 31 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 in 2020 and 2021. These emergency measures extended the maximum permissible age requirements of eligible vehicles due to expire in 2020 and 2021 in response to the impact of Covid-19 and to retain as many vehicles in the industry as possible. All eligible vehicles were still required to successfully complete both a roadworthiness and an SPSV suitability inspection every six months, to ensure standards and quality remain at an appropriate level.</p>	
--	--	--	---	--

				<p>Following ongoing impacts of Covid-19, emergency measure Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measure COVID-19) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations 2021 provided emergency COVID-19 protection to vehicles due to reach their maximum permissible age during 2022; and</p> <p>Vehicle Supply Emergency Measures</p> <p>In late 2022, climate, energy and geopolitical challenges made it unfeasible for all end of life SPSVs to be replaced throughout the following 12-15 months.</p> <p>The factors facing licence holders for the replacement of end of life SPSVs included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global shortage of semiconductor chips, neon, nickel and palladium; • Energy rationing in Europe; • Logistics disruptions in Germany; • Covid-19 lockdowns in China; and • Vehicle Supply to Ireland. <p>A pragmatic response was required to control the impacts of matters outside of the State’s control. As a result, NTA made an exceptional contingency provision in relation to the maximum permissible vehicle age limits of vehicles due to reach their end of life before 2025. The NTA held a public consultation inviting representations on the proposed Small Public Service Vehicle (Contingency Measure – Vehicle Supply) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations from interested parties. The period of the consultation was 19th September 2022 to 12th October 2022 inclusive. The NTA also consulted directly with the Advisory Committee on SPSVs and An Garda Síochána.</p> <p>1,938 responses were received. The vast majority of respondents (94%) agreed with the proposal. The Board of the NTA subsequently approved the signing of these Regulations on the 18th of November 2022. The consultation report is available to view in the Public Consultations section of the NTA website which can be accessed by clicking here.</p> <p>As a result of this measure, no licensed vehicle in the SPSV fleet at the time of enactment would be forced to leave the fleet as a result of age, before 01 January 2025.</p> <p>It should be noted that a uniform end date to the extensions was not applied, and extensions of 36 to 60 months were provided for across the differing original final operation dates of the impacted vehicles. These extension periods reflected the impact of the circumstances of the time on the fleet and only impacted vehicles with an original final operation date between 13th March 2020 and the end of 2024.</p> <p>Current legislation prevents a vehicle aged 10 years or over being</p>	
--	--	--	--	--	--

licensed as an SPSV, and NTA is not considering any further or other amendments to this legislation.

I trust that the above is of assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne Graham
Chief Executive

22/10/2024	191	FW: PQ Referred: 42776/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Richard Bruton	Dail Question No: 191 To ask the Minister for Transport if he will provide an update on active travel projects in Mayo; and if he will make a statement on the matter.	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 191 & 192 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Mayo County Council received an allocation of €3,500,000 in 2024 under the NTAs Active Travel Programme. There are 33 active projects with 11 of these being Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects and 3 Local Transport Plans (LTP). Six projects are currently at construction stage or nearing completion.</p> <p>Attached is a list of all 2024 Active Travel project allocations across Ireland. In respect of updates you may want on particular schemes, please contact Mayo County Council's Active Travel Team for further detailed information.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Richard Bruton, T.D.
------------	-----	--	---	--	----------------------

24/10/2024	105	<p>PQ Referred: 43767/24, for answer 24/10/2024, Written from - Alan Farrell</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 105</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the cost of maintaining the 20% reduction in public transport fares on public service obligation routes until 2030; and the cost of increasing the reduction by 5% to 25% and by 10% to 30%.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. However, I am not involved in the day-to-day operation of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the regulation of fares charged to passengers in respect of public transport services provided under public service obligation (PSO) contracts.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the Authority for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 105 of 24 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Please see details below in response to your Parliamentary Question.</p> <p>Maintain 20% reduction in public transport fares on public service obligation routes until 2030.</p> <p>The estimated cost (Fare Foregone) of maintaining the 20% reduction in public transport fares on PSO routes until 2030 range from €688m to €761m</p> <p>Assumptions and Constraints:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The above figures relates to fare foregone only and would not include any additional costs associated with extending the fare reduction such as administration costs and provision of additional services to cover any increase in demand. 2. It is assumed that there will be a 3% increase in demand each year after 2025 due to organic growth. 3. The above range given is for 2025 to 2030. <p>Introduce a further 5% reduction in public transport fares on public service obligation routes until 2030, bringing the total reduction to 25%.</p> <p>The estimated cost (Fare Foregone) of introducing a further 5% reduction in public transport fares on PSO routes until 2030, bringing the total reduction to 25% range from €860m to €951m</p> <p>Assumptions and Constraints:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The above figures relates to fare foregone only and would not include any additional costs associated with extending the fare reduction such as administration costs and provision of additional services to cover any increase in demand. 2. It is assumed that there will be a 3% increase in demand each year after 2025 due to organic growth. 3. No assumption made for the increase in demand due to price elasticity as a result of moving the price discount from 20% to 25%. 4. The above range given is for 2025 to 2030. <p>Introduce a further 10% reduction in public transport fares on public service obligation routes until 2030, bringing the total reduction to 30%.</p> <p>The estimated cost (Fare Foregone) of introducing a further 10% reduction in public transport fares on PSO routes until 2030, bringing the total reduction to 30% range from €1.032bn to €1.141bn</p>	Alan Farrell, T.D.
------------	-----	--	--	--	--------------------

Assumptions and Constraints:

1. The above figures relates to fare foregone only and would not include any additional costs associated with extending the fare reduction such as administration costs and provision of additional services to cover any increase in demand.
2. It is assumed that there will be a 3% increase in demand each year after 2025 due to organic growth.
3. No assumption made for the increase in demand due to price elasticity as a result of moving the price discount from 20% to 30%.

I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne Graham
Chief Executive

15/10/2024	163	<p>PQ Referred: 41029/24, for answer 15/10/2024, Written from - Sean Sherlock</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 163</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the number of bus shelters currently under consideration for installation in the Kildare area; the location and cost of each, in tabular form.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of bus stops/shelters nationally. Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 161 & 163 of 15 October, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA has been engaging with local authorities throughout the country in recent months in relation to the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme, whereby funding will be provided by the NTA to each local authority to progress the upgrade of bus stop facilities within its area of responsibility.</p> <p>The output of this engagement will be an agreed multi-annual programme of works to upgrade bus stop facilities that is intended to include the provision of new shelters at appropriate locations.</p> <p>In the case of Kildare County Council, this programme of works has not yet been fully agreed and further engagement is planned in the coming weeks.</p> <p>In addition, the NTA is currently tendering for a new bus shelters contract that will facilitate the supply and/or installation of new bus shelters as part of the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme.</p> <p>While the NTA has not yet been provided with a capital allocation for 2025, we hope to be in a position to fund this this Bus Stop Enhancement Programme at a similar level next year also.</p> <p>Once the available funding has been confirmed and the programme of works agreed with Kildare County Council, it will be possible to advise as to the upgrades to bus stop facilities (including new bus shelters) that will be progressed during 2025.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Seán Sherlock, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	---	---------------------

22/10/2024	192	FW: PQ Referred: 42776/24, for answer 22/10/2024, Written from - Richard Bruton	Dail Question No: 192 To ask the Minister for Transport for an update on active travel projects proposed or pending in County Mayo; and if he will make a statement on the matter.	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 191 & 192 of 22 October last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Mayo County Council received an allocation of €3,500,000 in 2024 under the NTAs Active Travel Programme. There are 33 active projects with 11 of these being Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects and 3 Local Transport Plans (LTP). Six projects are currently at construction stage or nearing completion.</p> <p>Attached is a list of all 2024 Active Travel project allocations across Ireland. In respect of updates you may want on particular schemes, please contact Mayo County Council's Active Travel Team for further detailed information.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Richard Bruton, T.D.
------------	-----	--	---	--	----------------------

17/10/2024	155	PQ REF 42178/24	<p>QUESTION</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the current cost of installing a new bus shelter at a bus stop that previously did not have one; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>REPLY</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of bus stops/shelters nationally.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I am writing to you concerning the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 155 of 17 October last.</p> <p>Typically, the installation of a bus shelter will require additional preparatory bus shelter enabling works, such as improved accessibility, the upgrading of footpaths and / or roads, in addition to the relocation of underground services. The scale and extent of these works can vary significantly depending on the condition of the receiving environment. Depending on the type and configuration of the shelter being installed, in addition to the scope of the supporting enabling works, the average cost for the installation of a bus shelter at a stop location, can range between €8,300 and €25,660.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Mairéad Farrell, T.D
------------	-----	--------------------	--	--	----------------------

05/11/2024	226	<p>PQ Referred: 44726/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Réada Cronin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 226</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport his plans to improve the capacity and reliability of the 139 bus route between Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 and Naas, County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's query to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 226 of 05 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA met with the operator of route 139 on 09 October after reports of an increase in demand leading to service punctuality issues were received by the Authority. A plan was put in place to run trial additional services on weekdays for 2 weeks from 14 October to 25 October inclusive during which time the NTA worked with the operator to review the performance and the effectiveness of the additional services.</p> <p>The NTA has since agreed to extend the trial for Period 12 (04 November to 01 December) with an amended set of additional services. The NTA will review keep performance and effectiveness under review in order to tailor the most appropriate support for route 139 during the school and college term.</p> <p>The NTA notes that any extension of additional services beyond the 01 December is subject to funding availability.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	<p>Reada Cronin, T.D</p>
------------	-----	--	---	---	--------------------------

05/11/2024	218	<p>PQ Referred: 44653/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Darren O'Rourke</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 218</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to provide an update on the 103 Bus Éireann bus service; its performance standard and plans to improve it; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators, in this case Bus Éireann.</p> <p>The performance of all public transport operators is monitored by the NTA as part of the contractual arrangements in place between it and the operators. These contractual arrangements allow for not just the monitoring of performance by the NTA and the publication of their annual performance reports, but importantly, the contracts also allow for the imposition of financial penalties where performance does not meet the required standard.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 218 of 05 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>On Sunday 27 October, Bus Éireann implemented a number of schedule adjustments to PSO (Public Service Obligation) bus services within the curtilage of the M3 (East Meath Commuter Corridor), including route 103. The purpose of these timetable adjustments is to address ongoing issues with punctuality and reliability on these commuter routes, it is not planned to enhance service capacity at this time, but it is anticipated that these schedule improvements will result in more consistent and reliable services. The Authority and Bus Éireann will keep capacity on Route 103 under review following implementation of the proposed changes and look to address any subsequent capacity issues that are identified, subject to the availability of resources, including funding.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Darren O'Rourke, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	--	-----------------------

05/11/2024	216	<p>PQ Referred: 44648/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Sean Fleming</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 216 To ask the Minister for Transport if the Irish Rail commuter fares can be extended to a particular train station (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Details Supplied: Portlaoise Train Station</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport.</p> <p>The issue raised by the Deputy is a matter for Irish Rail in conjunction with the National Transport Authority. Therefore, I have referred the Deputy's question to Irish Rail and the National Transport Authority for direct response to the Deputy.</p> <p>Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 216 of 05 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>In 2023, the NTA published its National Fares Strategy which is available at the link below. The objectives of the strategy are to ensure fares are equitable, consistent, and easy to understand. . Given the scale of the changes implied by the Strategy, it is envisaged that the proposals would be implemented over multiple fares determinations.</p> <p>https://www.nationaltransport.ie/publications/national-fares-strategy-2023/</p> <p>The first phase of the Fares Restructuring focuses on the Dublin City Zone & Dublin Commuter Zone as outlined in the NTA Fares Determination 2024, link of which is provided below, is expected to be delivered in Q1 2025, subject to the delivery of the appropriate infrastructure by Irish Rail's supplier. In a subsequent fares determination the focus will be on delivering the new fares strategy on a national level for all other services outside of Dublin including those at Portlaoise.</p> <p>https://www.nationaltransport.ie/publications/nta-fares-determination-2024/</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p> </p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Sean Fleming, T.D.
------------	-----	--	---	---	--------------------

05/11/2024	221	<p>PQ Referred: 44684/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Réada Cronin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 221</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to provide an update on cycling infrastructure development in Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to Active Travel. Funding is administered through the National Transport Authority (NTA), who, in partnership with local authorities, have responsibility for the selection and development of specific projects in each local authority area.</p> <p>Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have referred your question to that agency for a more detailed answer. If you do not receive a reply within 10 working days, please contact my private office.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 221 of 05 November and 173 & 174 of 22 October last, which have been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>In response to your Parliamentary Questions, please find attached updates for Active Travel projects currently ongoing with NTA funding in South Kildare and North Kildare.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	<p>Reada Cronin, T.D</p>
------------	-----	--	---	--	--------------------------

05/11/2024	214	<p>PQ Referred: 44642/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Mairéad Farrell</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 214</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to provide the total number that electrical buses servicing Galway; the total number which are currently not currently in use; and whether he is aware of any adverse issues they have encountered due to poor weather conditions.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of the national PSO bus fleet.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 214 of 05 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>There are no battery-electric buses currently operating urban public bus services provided by Bus Éireann in Galway city.</p> <p>There are however 40 plug-in hybrid buses operating these services; the NTA is not aware of any unexpectedly adverse issues having been encountered by Bus Éireann during the operation of these hybrid buses in poor weather conditions.</p> <p>Bus Éireann is currently out to tender for the provision of charging infrastructure that will support the operation of battery-electric buses in the city from 2026 onwards.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Mairéad Farrell, T.D
------------	-----	---	---	--	----------------------

05/11/2024	207	<p>PQ Referred: 44602/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Alan Farrell</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 207</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport, to provide an update on the planned introduction of next generation ticketing (NGT) on public transport services; to detail the expenditure to date and planned expenditure as it relates to NGT projects; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including ticketing and technology projects.</p> <p>The NTA's Next Generation Ticketing (NGT) project is for an upgraded ticketing system to facilitate a variety of payment methods on public transport services, including bus services. Fundamental to this project is a transition to an 'Account Based Ticketing' scheme incorporating mobile and card-based payments.</p> <p>In April of this year, following a competitive tender process conducted in line with all relevant EU and Irish procurement regulations, the NTA entered into a multi-year framework agreement with Indra Sistemas to deliver the NGT project. The advantage of the framework agreement is the flexibility it affords in terms of drawing down various services if required over the lifetime of the agreement.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for direct reply in relation to this project. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I am writing to you concerning the matters you raised in Parliamentary Questions No. 206 and 207 of 05 November 2024, which have been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>At this stage work on the preparation for the NTA's Next Generation Ticketing (NGT) programme is well advanced. That work comprises a series of projects to modernise the ticketing experience across the country and will be the next evolution of the very successful Leap Card integrated ticketing system. It will encompass all modes of transport in the country, including buses, rail, trams, TFI Local Link and the planned Metrolink.</p> <p>Customers will be able to use their bank debit/credit card, or their mobile phone, or their Leap Card or Free Travel Pass to use for travel. And the payment methods will be smarter – a greater choice of post-payment options (not just auto top-up) and the ability for the best fare for customers to be automatically charged. Better mobile apps and near real-time fare payment information will be available. Already, the NTA's barcode based mobile ticketing app TFI Go allows customers to buy tickets for all Bus Éireann PSO services nationwide, for 27 private bus operators services, and for most TFI Local Link regular rural services, directly from a smartphone. The ticket is downloaded to the app and can be used to travel straight away.</p> <p>As you may be aware, the public procurement competition for the Next Generation Ticketing project has completed and the NTA has appointed Indra Sistemas S.A. as our ticketing equipment partner under an overarching framework. NTA's approach is that individual Call-Off Contracts will be put in place under this overarching framework, each for defined packages of work – for example, deploy in Dublin, or deploy in Cork, or deploy on MetroLink. This was a very competitive procurement with 3 bidders, all significant players in the transport ticketing field, submitting final tenders. Having 3 bidders submitting detailed tenders was very positive and ensured that there was competitive tension between the bidders which we believe was reflected in the pricing. Following a detailed evaluation, Indra prevailed with the most economically advantageous bid and were appointed as the Framework supplier.</p> <p>Following the appointment of Indra as NTA's ticketing partner, focus then turned to planning the first call off contract under the Framework Agreement, which has since been signed. The first call off contract under this Framework Agreement is to design, implement, operate, support, and maintain for 10 years, Next Generation Ticketing on a phased basis across all PSO services (bus, rail & light rail) in the Greater Dublin Area. The contract value is €73m in Capital Expenditure and €76m in Fixed Operating Costs. Additional variable costs will ensue based on a cost per transaction once live which are also part of the contract. This €149m (€73m plus €76m) is</p>	Alan Farrell, T.D.
------------	-----	--	---	--	--------------------

the only money that has been approved to date for NGT with the NGT supplier. NTA has incurred expenditure on the NGT project to get to this point. These costs include the costs of developing the Business Cases, cost modelling, running the complex competitive dialogue procurement and specialist resources in transport ticketing, contactless payments, Financial Management, Cyber Security, ICT, and legal advice.

Following on from the first call off contract, further Business Cases are being considered for the full national rollout of NGT and will result in additional call off contracts being awarded under the Framework. These business cases will take into account the cost effectiveness of the implementation. This programme of call-off contracts projects is large and complex and will take a number of years to complete.

A comprehensive governance model has been implemented to oversee the NGT project given its importance and scale. The BusConnects Programme Board is the Approving Authority for the project and approves all Infrastructure Guidelines (capital appraisal guidelines) deliverables and project funding requests. There is a dedicated NGT project board, and the project is externally scrutinised by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer's (OGCIO) Digital Government Oversight Unit (DGOU) from the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, and also reports to the Major Project Governance Oversight Group (MPGOG) within the Department of Transport as required. The Project Board is the main decision-making and advisory body and its members along with representatives from key stakeholder groups meet regularly to provide direction, authority to proceed and agree a strategy for the project. The project board is responsible for holding the project team and NGT Service Provider to account for all deliverables. The NTA board through its Committees also provide the appropriate governance for all NTA projects and programmes.

Yours sincerely

Anne Graham
Chief Executive

05/11/2024	206	<p>PQ Referred: 44601/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Alan Farrell</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 206</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the measures his Department is taking to ensure that next generation ticketing on public transport services is implemented in the most cost-effective manner; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including ticketing and technology projects.</p> <p>The NTA's Next Generation Ticketing (NGT) project is for an upgraded ticketing system to facilitate a variety of payment methods on public transport services, including bus services. Fundamental to this project is a transition to an 'Account Based Ticketing' scheme incorporating mobile and card-based payments.</p> <p>In April of this year, following a competitive tender process conducted in line with all relevant EU and Irish procurement regulations, the NTA entered into a multi-year framework agreement with Indra Sistemas to deliver the NGT project. The advantage of the framework agreement is the flexibility it affords in terms of drawing down various services if required over the lifetime of the agreement.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for direct reply in relation to this project. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I am writing to you concerning the matters you raised in Parliamentary Questions No. 206 and 207 of 05 November 2024, which have been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>At this stage work on the preparation for the NTA's Next Generation Ticketing (NGT) programme is well advanced. That work comprises a series of projects to modernise the ticketing experience across the country and will be the next evolution of the very successful Leap Card integrated ticketing system. It will encompass all modes of transport in the country, including buses, rail, trams, TFI Local Link and the planned Metrolink.</p> <p>Customers will be able to use their bank debit/credit card, or their mobile phone, or their Leap Card or Free Travel Pass to use for travel. And the payment methods will be smarter – a greater choice of post-payment options (not just auto top-up) and the ability for the best fare for customers to be automatically charged. Better mobile apps and near real-time fare payment information will be available. Already, the NTA's barcode based mobile ticketing app TFI Go allows customers to buy tickets for all Bus Éireann PSO services nationwide, for 27 private bus operators services, and for most TFI Local Link regular rural services, directly from a smartphone. The ticket is downloaded to the app and can be used to travel straight away.</p> <p>As you may be aware, the public procurement competition for the Next Generation Ticketing project has completed and the NTA has appointed Indra Sistemas S.A. as our ticketing equipment partner under an overarching framework. NTA's approach is that individual Call-Off Contracts will be put in place under this overarching framework, each for defined packages of work – for example, deploy in Dublin, or deploy in Cork, or deploy on MetroLink. This was a very competitive procurement with 3 bidders, all significant players in the transport ticketing field, submitting final tenders. Having 3 bidders submitting detailed tenders was very positive and ensured that there was competitive tension between the bidders which we believe was reflected in the pricing. Following a detailed evaluation, Indra prevailed with the most economically advantageous bid and were appointed as the Framework supplier.</p> <p>Following the appointment of Indra as NTA's ticketing partner, focus then turned to planning the first call off contract under the Framework Agreement, which has since been signed. The first call off contract under this Framework Agreement is to design, implement, operate, support, and maintain for 10 years, Next Generation Ticketing on a phased basis across all PSO services (bus, rail & light rail) in the Greater Dublin Area. The contract value is €73m in Capital Expenditure and €76m in Fixed Operating Costs. Additional variable costs will ensue based on a cost per transaction once live which are also part of the contract. This €149m (€73m plus €76m) is</p>	Alan Farrell, T.D.
------------	-----	--	---	--	--------------------

the only money that has been approved to date for NGT with the NGT supplier. NTA has incurred expenditure on the NGT project to get to this point. These costs include the costs of developing the Business Cases, cost modelling, running the complex competitive dialogue procurement and specialist resources in transport ticketing, contactless payments, Financial Management, Cyber Security, ICT, and legal advice.

Following on from the first call off contract, further Business Cases are being considered for the full national rollout of NGT and will result in additional call off contracts being awarded under the Framework. These business cases will take into account the cost effectiveness of the implementation. This programme of call-off contracts projects is large and complex and will take a number of years to complete.

A comprehensive governance model has been implemented to oversee the NGT project given its importance and scale. The BusConnects Programme Board is the Approving Authority for the project and approves all Infrastructure Guidelines (capital appraisal guidelines) deliverables and project funding requests. There is a dedicated NGT project board, and the project is externally scrutinised by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer's (OGCIO) Digital Government Oversight Unit (DGOU) from the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, and also reports to the Major Project Governance Oversight Group (MPGOG) within the Department of Transport as required. The Project Board is the main decision-making and advisory body and its members along with representatives from key stakeholder groups meet regularly to provide direction, authority to proceed and agree a strategy for the project. The project board is responsible for holding the project team and NGT Service Provider to account for all deliverables. The NTA board through its Committees also provide the appropriate governance for all NTA projects and programmes.

Yours sincerely

Anne Graham
Chief Executive

05/11/2024	203	<p>PQ Referred: 44548/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Darren O'Rourke</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 203</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport for an update on the 103 Bus Éireann bus service, its performance standard and plans to improve it; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators, in this case Bus Éireann.</p> <p>The performance of all public transport operators is monitored by the NTA as part of the contractual arrangements in place between it and the operators. These contractual arrangements allow for not just the monitoring of performance by the NTA and the publication of their annual performance reports, but importantly, the contracts also allow for the imposition of financial penalties where performance does not meet the required standard.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 203 of 05 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>On Sunday 27 October, Bus Éireann implemented a number of schedule adjustments to PSO (Public Service Obligation) bus services within the curtilage of the M3 (East Meath Commuter Corridor), including route 103. The purpose of these timetable adjustments is to address ongoing issues with punctuality and reliability on these commuter routes, it is not planned to enhance service capacity at this time, but it is anticipated that these schedule improvements will result in more consistent and reliable services. The Authority and Bus Éireann will keep capacity on Route 103 under review following implementation of the proposed changes and look to address any subsequent capacity issues that are identified, subject to the availability of resources, including funding.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Darren O'Rourke, T.D.
------------	-----	---	---	--	-----------------------

05/11/2024	197	<p>PQ Referred: 44388/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Ged Nash</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 197</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to request from the NTA an update on the status of the proposed transportation plan for the Drogheda area, including parts of east Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region sets out that the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly will work with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and relevant local authorities to prepare local transport plans for selected settlements including Drogheda.</p> <p>The NTA, in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland, has developed an advice note which sets out a methodology on how to assess the opportunities and constraints for sustainable transport within an area. This Area Based Transport Assessment methodology has been designed as a key input into local transport plans.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's role in this matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 197 of 05 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA has recently commenced work on a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Drogheda using the NTA/TII Area-Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) methodology, in conjunction with Louth County Council and Meath County Council. It is envisaged that a draft LTP will be complete by mid-2025. It is intended that public consultation on the Draft LTP will occur as part of the consultation for the Draft of the statutory Coordinated Area Plan (formerly Joint Urban Area Plan), which is being prepared by the two local authorities in parallel with the LTP</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Ged Nash, T.D.
------------	-----	--	--	---	----------------

05/11/2024	189	<p>PQ Referred: 44003/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Noel Grealish</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 189</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the total number of electric vehicles (EV) buses deployed in Ireland over the past three years; the breakdown of these EV buses between State-run public transport services and the commercial bus sector during this period; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including, public transport fleet.</p> <p>The Government is committed to the decarbonisation of the public transport sector in line with the Climate Action Plan. No new diesel-only buses have been purchased for urban public service obligation bus fleets since July 2019, as set out in the National Development Plan 2018-2027. The transition to a zero-emission urban bus fleet is currently programmed to take up until 2035, based on replacement of non-zero-emission buses as they reach the end of their efficient service lives.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 189 of 05 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA has purchased new bus and coach fleet for use on Public Service Obligation (PSO) bus services since 2017 and has supplied electric buses for deployment on both PSO bus services and certain Local Link bus services.</p> <p>There are 11 battery-electric buses in operation on public bus services provided by Bus Éireann in Athlone since January 2023.</p> <p>There are currently 100 battery-electric buses in operation on public bus services provided by Dublin Bus in Dublin City, 20 of which were first deployed in 2023.</p> <p>There are currently 34 battery-electric buses in operation on public bus services provided by Bus Éireann in Limerick City, all of which were first deployed in 2024.</p> <p>There are also 3 (hydrogen-) fuel-cell-electric buses engaged in a technology pilot with Bus Éireann on public bus services between Dublin City and Counties Meath and Louth.</p> <p>In addition, there are a total of 226 plug-in and self-charging hybrid buses in operation on public bus services provided by Dublin Bus in Dublin City, which were deployed between 2019 and 2022, and a further 61 plug-in hybrid buses in operation on public bus services provided by Bus Éireann in Limerick City and Cork City, which were deployed in 2021 and 2022.</p> <p>Lastly, there are 2 battery-electric buses in operation on Local link bus services in Dingle, County Kerry and 2 battery-electric SUVs in operation on Local link bus services on Cape Clear Island.</p> <p>In relation to private commercial operators, we do not hold information on overall fleet types for those operators.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Noel Grealish, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	--	---------------------

05/11/2024	192	<p>PQ Referred: 44158/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Sean Fleming</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 192</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport further to Parliamentary Question No. 288 of 9 September 2024, when a reply will be received; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, as Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the provision of integrated ticketing and information systems for public transport, including the Leap card.</p> <p>Given the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I referred Parliamentary Question 288 of 9 September 2024 to the NTA for a direct reply. I apologise that a reply has not yet issued.</p> <p>I have again referred the Deputy's original question and this question to the NTA for direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Minister,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 288 of 09 September last and to your Parliamentary Question No. 192 of 05 November, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.</p> <p>In 2023, the NTA published its National Fares Strategy which is available at the link below. The objectives of the strategy are to ensure fares are equitable, consistent, and easy to understand.</p> <p>https://www.nationaltransport.ie/publications/national-fares-strategy-2023/</p> <p>The first phase of the Fares Restructuring focuses on the Dublin City Zone & Dublin Commuter Zone as outlined in the NTA Fares Determination 2024, link of which is provided below, is expected to be delivered in Q1 2025, subject to the delivery of the appropriate infrastructure by Irish Rail's supplier. In a subsequent fares determination the focus will be on delivering the new fares strategy on a national level for all other services outside of Dublin, however it will not involve the enabling of leap card capabilities in stations outside the Dublin and other city commuter zones. Ticketing for services from Portlaoise will remain as is but some further innovation may accrue from the delivery of the Next Generation Ticketing project across the rail network.</p> <p>https://www.nationaltransport.ie/publications/nta-fares-determination-2024/</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Sean Fleming, T.D.
------------	-----	--	--	---	--------------------

05/11/2024	183	<p>PQ Referred: 43902/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Verona Murphy</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 183</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the funding that has been allocated from the Office of Public Works in terms of protection against coastal erosion along the Rosslare-Dublin rail line; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure including, in consultation with Iarnród Éireann, the East Coast Railway Infrastructure Protection Projects (ECRIPP).</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter and the specific issues raised by the Deputy, I have referred the Deputy's questions to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 183 of 05 November 2024 last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The Eastern Coastal Railway Infrastructure Protection Projects (ECRIPP) is one of the various on-going investments funded by NTA to deliver improvements to rail services along the South Eastern Line. ECRIPP comprises a range of projects to protect the existing railway line from coastal flooding and coastal erosion, providing coastal protection measures that will help to maintain the operational integrity of the Dublin to Rosslare Railway Line, which serves the area as a key sustainable transport artery. ECRIPP is being delivered by Iarnród Éireann and a funding allocation of €3 million was provided by the NTA to Iarnród Éireann for 2024.</p> <p>It is worth noting that a public consultation is currently ongoing in respect of the proposed protection measures for the five coastal cell areas between Merrion and Wicklow. Details are available at the following link: https://www.irishrail.ie/en-ie/about-us/iarnrod-eireann-projects-and-investments/ECRIPP/ecripp-pc1</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Verona Murphy, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	---	---------------------

05/11/2024	202	<p>PQ Referred: 44501/24, for answer 05/11/2024, Written from - Niamh Smyth</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 202</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to review correspondence regarding Bus Éireann service 109x; to request Bus Éireann to increase provision on this route; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators, in this case Bus Éireann.</p> <p>The performance of all public transport operators is monitored by the NTA as part of the contractual arrangements in place between it and the operators. These contractual arrangements allow for not just the monitoring of performance by the NTA and the publication of their annual performance reports, but importantly, the contracts also allow for the imposition of financial penalties where performance does not meet the required standard.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 202 of 05 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA continue to monitor the services operated by Bus Éireann including route 109x. If there are capacity issues arising at particular times, they will be asked to provide a plan to address the constraint. The NTA will approve any additional capacity that is warranted subject to the availability of PSO (Public Service Obligation) funding, fleet and drivers.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Niamh Smyth, T.D.
------------	-----	---	--	--	-------------------

06/11/2024	43	<p>PQ Referred: 45413/24, for answer 06/11/2024, Written from - Fergus O'Dowd</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 43</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the progress to date on the provision of strategic park and ride facilities on the south bound carriageway on the M1 approaching Dublin, the provision of which could significantly reduce the volume of non-HGV vehicles entering the city; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of park and ride facilities.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 43 of 06 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Park and Ride can intercept car trips where people are reliant on private car at an early viable point in their journey thereby reducing the distances travelled by private car with a corresponding reduction in carbon emissions and congestion.</p> <p>The NTA is currently progressing a project to develop a Bus Based Park and Ride at Junction 4 of the M1 at Lissenhall. This Park and Ride will be located close to the northern extent of the Metrolink line (Estuary Station) and is planned to act as an interim solution to reduce vehicles entering the city prior to the commencement of operation of the Metrolink, at which point the Lissenhall bus based Park and Ride would be superseded by the Metrolink Park and Ride at Estuary Station.</p> <p>The Lissenhall Park and Ride will provide approximately 900 spaces. The project is currently at Preliminary Design Stage. It requires the preparation of a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment Report as part of a planning permission application. The preparation of that application is underway and it is expected that a formal planning permission application will be submitted to Fingal County Council in Q1 2025.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Fergus O'Dowd, T.D.
------------	----	---	--	--	---------------------

06/11/2024	42	<p>PQ Referred: 45410/24, for answer 06/11/2024, Written from - Fergus O'Dowd</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 42</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport to outline all capital investments, if any made by his Department in the constituency of Louth East Meath since 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Identical Question(s): to all Depts.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>Deputy,</p> <p>As Minister for Transport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport, the national roads programme, the regional and local roads programme, and active travel.</p> <p>Investments are delivered by the relevant local authorities, working in partnership with the National Transport Authority, which is responsible for Active Travel and Public Transport Investment; Transport and Infrastructure Ireland, which is responsible for National Roads Investment.</p> <p>Payments to all local authorities concerning regional and local roads investments are outlined in the regional and local road payments booklets which are available in the Oireachtas Library. Decisions regarding allocations to individual Municipal Districts are a matter for each local authority. In this regard I suggest you contact the relevant Local Authority directly for details of the allocation of funding for regional and local roads in these constituencies.</p> <p>I have requested that each of the above organisations respond to you directly relating to investments in the specific districts referenced. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 42 of 06 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Please find attached details of capital funding allocations made by the NTA to Meath County Council and Louth County Council over the requested period.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Fergus O'Dowd, T.D.
------------	----	---	--	--	---------------------

07/11/2024	42	<p>PQ Referred: 46021/24, for answer 07/11/2024, Written from - Bernard J. Durkan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 42</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport whether a bus shelter might be provided at Robertstown West, Robertstown, County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including the provision of bus stops/shelters nationally.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 42 of 07 November 2024 last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>The NTA has initiated a “Bus Stop Enhancement Programme” across all local authorities, with a funding allocation of €500,000 to each local authority as part of the 2024 NTA annual funding allocations. The objective of this programme is to facilitate the enhancement / upgrade of existing bus stops across the country, including the provision of poles and hard-standing areas where none exist, the provision of seating (where space exists) and the installation of bus shelters in appropriate locations. It is intended to repeat this into 2025 as an annual funding stream for a number of years beyond then, to enable and facilitate the necessary uplift and enhancements to bus stop locations across the country.</p> <p>Each local authority is being requested to prepare a prioritised programme of bus stop enhancements in their administrative area for design and delivery on a phased basis. Due to the scope and extent of individual ad hoc requests that the NTA receives for the provision of shelters, and other improvement works, this is the most effective and efficient process for the provision of bus shelters. It allows the NTA to coordinate the development and implementation of bus shelter programmes at county level rather than through piecemeal arrangements, synchronising and aligning with other planned improvement works being conducted by local authorities. The NTA is now engaged with individual local authorities in relation to the development of their programmes for the coming years.</p> <p>Accordingly, it is intended that bus shelter provision will be coordinated by each local authority under the “Bus Stop Enhancement Programme”, having regard to the allocation provided by the NTA to each local authority. This approach aligns with the position that the provision of bus shelters is generally not achievable without some works – kerb changes, footpath changes, road markings and similar - being undertaken by local authorities. Through a central supply contract, the NTA will provide the bus shelter to the local authority and will also make available the NTA’s bus shelter contractor to undertake its installation (following the Council’s preparatory works) and to maintain the bus shelter subsequently.</p> <p>Accordingly, we will bring your request to the attention of the relevant Council personnel who are preparing the Council’s prioritised programme in respect of bus stop enhancements in addition to other planned works. It is worth noting that not all locations are suitable for the installation of bus shelters due to underground services, width issues, sight line issues, access issues or similar other items such as the negative impact on affected parties / adjacent premises. Each location is required to be technically assessed against current technical</p>	Bernard Durkan, T.D
------------	----	---	--	---	---------------------

requirements, road safety matters, accessibility standards, third party planning matters, available space in addition to the design details.

I trust that the above information is of assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Hugh Creegan
Deputy Chief Executive

07/11/2024	24	<p>PQ Referred: 45586/24, for answer 07/11/2024, Written from - Réada Cronin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 24</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport regarding the train stations in County Kildare, if they have a shelter; if they have an enclosed waiting room; if they have a lift or disability access; if they have toilet facilities; if these facilities are open for use; the number of working parking spaces available; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including, in consultation with Iarnród Éireann, facilities in train stations in County Kildare.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 24 of 07 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Due to the details requested in this Parliamentary Question, I would suggest contacting Iarnród Éireann directly. They would be in a better position to provide the details requested.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	<p>Reada Cronin, T.D</p>
------------	----	--	--	---	--------------------------

07/11/2024	27	<p>PQ Referred: 45597/24, for answer 07/11/2024, Written from - Réada Cronin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 27</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the progress being made in relation to DART+; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including, in consultation with Iarnród Éireann, the DART+ programme.</p> <p>The Preliminary Business Case for the whole DART+ programme was approved by Cabinet at Decision Gate 1 of the Public Spending Code in December 2021. The Decision also permitted the purchase of additional DART fleet. The first order for the purchase of 95 additional DART carriages, which comprises 65 battery-electric carriages and 30 electric carriages, have started to arrive for testing prior to entry into service in 2026. The battery-electric carriages are planned to enter service on the northern line to Drogheda. In November 2022, the Government approved a second purchase of fleet under the framework agreement with Alstom, which will see 90 new battery-electric carriages arrive around 2026.</p> <p>A Railway Order application for DART+ West, which provides for an extension of DART services from Dublin city centre to M3 Parkway and Maynooth, was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in July 2022. A Railway Order was granted by An Bord Pleanála in July 2024 subject to certain conditions, notably that the proposed depot west of Maynooth not be constructed due to concerns about flood risk. Iarnród Éireann are currently exploring other options for the construction of a depot in collaboration with the NTA to progress the project into the procurement process. Iarnród Éireann and the NTA are also considering responses to legal challenges to the projects planning decision.</p> <p>A Railway Order application for DART+ South-West was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in March 2023. This commenced the formal planning process for the Kildare line.</p> <p>A Railway Order for DART+ Coastal North was lodged in July 2024. The project will significantly increase the peak hourly capacity and frequency on the Northern route between Dublin city and Malahide, Howth and Drogheda, with the section between Malahide and Drogheda (as part of the service between Dublin city and Drogheda) increasing in capacity from circa 4,800 to 8,800 passengers at peak hour/direction upon project completion.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter I have referred the Deputy's</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 27 of 07 November 2024 last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>I note that the Minister has provided a comprehensive response to this Parliamentary Question. The NTA has nothing further to add to the Ministers response. More detailed information can be obtained from the DART+ website at the following link:</p> <p>https://www.dartplus.ie/en-ie/home</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	<p>Reada Cronin, T.D</p>
------------	----	--	---	--	--------------------------

question to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.

07/11/2024	25	<p>PQ Referred: 45587/24, for answer 07/11/2024, Written from - Réada Cronin</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 25</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport his plans to reopen the Curragh train station on a permanent basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure in the Greater Dublin Area, including, in consultation with Iarnród Éireann, the reopening of any train stations.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in this matter I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 25 of 07 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>There are no current plans to open a train station at the Curragh on a permanent basis. The Curragh is located between the major settlements of Newbridge and Kildare Town and the dispersed population between those towns around The Curragh is considered to be adequately served by their respective train stations. As there is no significant concentration of population in The Curragh itself, a permanent station was not identified as necessary or justifiable in cost terms, in the work undertaken for the current GDA (Greater Dublin Area) Transport Strategy, published in 2022. Furthermore, the NTA notes that on days where race meetings take place at The Curragh Racecourse, shuttle bus services are provided to the venue from Newbridge and Kildare stations.</p> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	<p>Reada Cronin, T.D</p>
------------	----	--	---	---	--------------------------

07/11/2024	33	<p>PQ Referred: 45730/24, for answer 07/11/2024, Written from - Thomas Gould</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 33</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the spend to date on BusConnects Cork.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As the Deputy may be aware, BusConnects will be transformative for all five of our cities, including Cork. The third round of public consultation on the 11 sustainable transport corridors in Cork concluded last December. There was positive stakeholder engagement in relation to these proposals.</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure, including BusConnects Cork.</p> <p>Noting the NTA's responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 33 of 07 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Please see table below regarding BusConnects Cork expenditure. The table provides the total expenditure up to the 11 November 2024.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1605 527 2395 716"> <thead> <tr> <th>Row Labels</th> <th>Sum of 2021 Spend</th> <th>Sum of 2022 Spend</th> <th>Sum of 2023 Spend</th> <th>Sum of 2024 Spend to 11.11.24</th> <th>Sum of Spend to Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BCC - Sustainable</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transport Corridors</td> <td>939,100</td> <td>1,200,641</td> <td>9,434,377</td> <td>15,305,038</td> <td>26,879,156</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BCC - Depots</td> <td>14,021</td> <td>8,642</td> <td>2,760,238</td> <td>751,356</td> <td>3,534,257</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BCC - Network Redesign</td> <td>616,615</td> <td>595,648</td> <td>971,852</td> <td>1,345,090</td> <td>3,529,205</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BCC - Support Costs</td> <td>-</td> <td>14,659</td> <td>55,609</td> <td>850,572</td> <td>920,840</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td>1,569,736</td> <td>1,819,590</td> <td>13,222,076</td> <td>18,252,056</td> <td>34,863,458</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>I trust that the above information is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p><hr/>Hugh Creegan Deputy Chief Executive</p>	Row Labels	Sum of 2021 Spend	Sum of 2022 Spend	Sum of 2023 Spend	Sum of 2024 Spend to 11.11.24	Sum of Spend to Date	BCC - Sustainable						Transport Corridors	939,100	1,200,641	9,434,377	15,305,038	26,879,156	BCC - Depots	14,021	8,642	2,760,238	751,356	3,534,257	BCC - Network Redesign	616,615	595,648	971,852	1,345,090	3,529,205	BCC - Support Costs	-	14,659	55,609	850,572	920,840	Grand Total	1,569,736	1,819,590	13,222,076	18,252,056	34,863,458	Thomas Gould T.D
Row Labels	Sum of 2021 Spend	Sum of 2022 Spend	Sum of 2023 Spend	Sum of 2024 Spend to 11.11.24	Sum of Spend to Date																																										
BCC - Sustainable																																															
Transport Corridors	939,100	1,200,641	9,434,377	15,305,038	26,879,156																																										
BCC - Depots	14,021	8,642	2,760,238	751,356	3,534,257																																										
BCC - Network Redesign	616,615	595,648	971,852	1,345,090	3,529,205																																										
BCC - Support Costs	-	14,659	55,609	850,572	920,840																																										
Grand Total	1,569,736	1,819,590	13,222,076	18,252,056	34,863,458																																										

07/11/2024	18	<p>PQ Referred: 46020/24, for answer 07/11/2024, Written from - Bernard J. Durkan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 18</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport whether arrangements could be made for the Naas-Blanchardstown bus service to extend to facilitating day patients at Blanchardstown Hospital by way of bus stop in or near campus; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 18 of 07 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>At present the Authority has no current plans to extend the route of the contracted 139 bus service to Connolly Hospital. Before the commencement of this service, the Authority had planned to include Connolly Hospital as the final destination of this route, however, Connolly Hospital did not give permission for a stop on its campus.</p> <p>The Authority ultimately chose the stop located at TUD (Technological University Dublin) in Blanchardstown as the terminus for the 139 service, as there was a dedicated layover space, a large amount of employment and educational transport demand in the environs and it was positively supported by the campus authorities. Please note that it is possible to interchange in Blanchardstown Shopping Centre with frequent bus services operating between the Shopping Centre and Connolly Hospital.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Bernard Durkan, T.D
------------	----	---	--	---	---------------------

07/11/2024	41	<p>PQ Referred: 45994/24, for answer 07/11/2024, Written from - Pádraig O'Sullivan</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 41</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport when the Kerry Pike and Clogheen bus will be operational in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport.</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally. The NTA also has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and New Town Services. The rollout of transport services in County Cork under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is dependent on the Annual Estimates Process.</p> <p>In light of the NTA's responsibilities for the rollout of new and enhanced services, I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 41 of 07 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Under BusConnects Cork Network Redesign, new route 53 is planned to serve Kerry Pike.</p> <p>Subject to funding availability, it is intended that the first phase of the new local bus network for Cork will be delivered in early 2026 with the remaining phases to be fully implemented in 2026 & 2027. Note that this timeline is dependent on delivery of new depot space in early 2026 and also on sufficient driver and fleet availability.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance and clarifies the current status of the matter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Padraig O'Sullivan, T.D.
------------	----	--	--	---	--------------------------

07/11/2024	35	<p>PQ Referred: 45732/24, for answer 07/11/2024, Written from - Thomas Gould</p>	<p>Dail Question No: 35</p> <p>To ask the Minister for Transport the number of drivers he believes will be needed in Cork in the next 12 months to run the bus service properly.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>As Minister for Transport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport; however, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations of public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public passenger transport services nationally and for the scheduling and timetabling of these services in conjunction with the relevant transport operators, in this case Bus Éireann.</p> <p>The performance of all public transport operators is monitored by the NTA as part of the contractual arrangements in place between it and the operators. These contractual arrangements allow for not just the monitoring of performance by the NTA and the publication of their annual performance reports, but importantly, the contracts also allow for the imposition of financial penalties where performance does not meet the required standard.</p> <p>In light of their responsibility in this area, I have forwarded the Deputy's request to the NTA and Bus Éireann for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.</p>	<p>Dear Deputy,</p> <p>I refer to the matter you raised in Parliamentary Question No. 35 of 07 November last, which has been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for reply.</p> <p>Following engagement with Bus Éireann on this matter, we estimate that Bus Éireann will require 40 to 50 Drivers to deliver the CPR (Capacity Punctuality and Reliability) & Mitigation changes in Cork Depot between February & August 2025. In addition to this, we estimate that Bus Éireann will need to recruit approximately another 80 Drivers to deliver Bus Connects Phase 1 in 2026. These figures are best estimates at present and may be subject to change.</p> <p>I trust that the above is of assistance.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>_____ Anne Graham Chief Executive</p>	Thomas Gould T.D
------------	----	--	---	---	------------------