



**Kildare County Council
Roads, Transportation & Public Safety Department
Áras Chill Dara
Naas
Co. Kildare**

Date: 14th September 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Newbridge Local Transport Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

County Kildare Chamber is the business organisation in Kildare, proactively working to identify and progress developments that are facilitative of economic and sustainable growth. Representing an employer base of 400 businesses and over 38,000 employees across the county, County Kildare Chamber is the largest business organisation in the mid-east region of Ireland.

Given the significant breadth and depth of our membership, and our representation on various bodies at local and national level, County Kildare Chamber constitutes the representative voice for business in Kildare.

County Kildare Chamber is committed to improving the business environment and quality of life in Kildare and the wider region, and strongly supports the vision of growth contained within the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Mid-Eastern Enterprise Plan. With this in mind, County Kildare Chamber welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Newbridge Local Transport Plan.

As a business organisation, County Kildare Chamber believes that long term planning and development, and specific project delivery such as this within key towns and villages creates a more diverse and resilient County.



2.0 SUBMISSION

Newbridge is the largest town in Kildare. During the years 1991-2011 the population doubled, and by 2016 the figure was 22,742. The town's population is estimated to have grown by a further 6% between the 2016-2022 census periods, to approx. 24,000.

This has also seen a sustained period of development within Newbridge town, with a number of housing projects currently underway. This increased population and development has naturally led to greater road users, be it private vehicle use, public transport, pedestrian or cycle movement.

Several job and development announcements for the County in recent months have been in the Newbridge area. For instance, Diageo's job announcement and planned new brewery, Bord na Mona's new building development and Keurig Dr Pepper's new site opening have all taken place in the Newbridge town area. The current road and transport system is no longer fit for purpose, narrow traffic lanes, limited cycle and pedestrian paths and a single access bridge.

An unsafe travel environment makes active travel less inviting and diminishes demand. For our Chamber traffic is a key concern, congestion carries significant costs with it. Given that Newbridge is for many the retail capital of the County, high volumes of traffic congestion on the main street are a hinderance to business in addition to a public health and safety concern.

The benefits of people friendly streets that promote the utilisation of public transport in combination with active transport networks and technologies create a healthier urban environment, reduce CO2 emissions, encourages resilient local economies, and makes for a more efficient use of finite land resources –in the short-run, the reprioritisation of resources will be zero-sum.

County Kildare Chamber welcomes the decision by Kildare County Council to review and open consultation on the new preferred option for a full transport plan for Newbridge to be created.



Public safety should always be of the upmost importance for any public office or Authority, the current town road and transport system, we believe is disadvantaging both business and the community in Newbridge. We believe a flowing one-way traffic system around the town, with an increase in both cycle lanes and pedestrian footpaths would provide the least disruption to the town & natural surroundings whilst providing a safe and convenient choice for pedestrians and cyclists moving across the town. We also believe the discussion around a second bridge for Newbridge should be looked at under this transport plan. The Chamber supports any positive move in this regard towards resolution to an issue which has been ongoing for over two decades.

In March 2020, County Kildare Chamber, Chambers Ireland and ICC Ireland announced that we had signed up to a new charter supporting the UN Sustainability Goals (SDGs). One of these goals, which we have worked to advocate for is the Sustainable Cities and Communities Goal.

County Kildare Chamber strives to lead and work with our stakeholders to develop the idea of sustainable towns and economically vibrant communities in the County.

With this in mind, we believe that cities and towns need more housing, transport and social infrastructure. For the '10 minute settlement' concept to become a reality, active travel and pedestrian and cycle scheme will need to be significantly increased.

Traffic congestion can be recorded at the junction 12 & 13 on the M7 most mornings and is now back to near pre-pandemic levels. Within the town, during peak morning & evening times, aswell as school times, traffic on the main street is severely impacted. The Chamber believes this plan should include some traffic calming measures in both areas, which would add to increasing traffic flow at pinch points during peak hours.

3.0 CONCLUSION

County Kildare Chamber welcomes the chance to comment on a full local transport plan for the Newbridge area. This plan will also feed into the Local Area Plan to create a more seamless whole approach for the town and surrounds for Newbridge. This development will mean a safer way for the public to travel through Newbridge and the surrounds. We believe it will also increase the numbers using active travel and transport options, as these modes of transport will now be amenable.



This development and others promoting active forms of transport will go a long way to making towns and villages more sustainable in Kildare. We would like to particularly highlight the need for traffic calming, a one-way system within the town, increased cycle and pedestrian lanes and the inclusion of provision for a second river crossing/bridge for Newbridge to be included within this transport plan.

We trust that the contents of this submission will be taken into consideration by Kildare County Council, and we are available at all times for consultation, discussion and support. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries regarding this submission.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sinéad Ronan', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sinéad Ronan
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