Mid & East Antrim
Borough Council

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PREPARATORY STUDIES

PAPER NO. 14 - TRANSPORTATION

SEPTEMBER 2016

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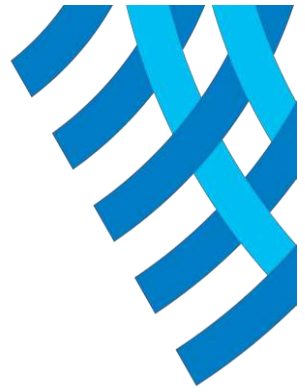
Contents

Executive Summary

Purpose:

To provide Members with an overview of the policy context in relation to transportation and to provide baseline information on the current transportation provision and future transportation initiatives within the Mid & East Antrim Borough Council area.

Content:

The paper provides information on the policy context for formulating Local Development Plan transportation strategies and policies, as well as an overview of the existing transportation situation within the Council area - including strategic road network, modes of travel, current and proposed transportation schemes, existing car parking provision and public transport services.

Recommendation:

That Members notes the findings and considers how this paper will be used to inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan in meeting transportation needs across the Council area.

1 - Introduction

Mid & East
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1 Introduction

1.1 This is one of a series of papers being presented to the Planning Committee as part of the preparatory studies aimed at gathering the evidence base for the new Local Development Plan (LDP).

1.2 The purpose of this paper is to inform Members about the current transportation situation within the Council area by providing details on the strategic road network, public transport services, car parking provision, as well as current and proposed transportation schemes and initiatives. It also provides an overview of the regional planning and roads policy context in relation to transportation.

1.3 The paper also aims to appraise Members of the relationship between the LDP and transportation, in particular the role of the LDP in seeking to integrate land use planning with transport planning, in line with broader regional policy direction at achieving sustainable development.

1.4 Good transportation is important to the local economy and vital in attracting inward investment. The movement of people and the efficient distribution of goods and services is essential to the proper functioning of the Borough. Being able to access essential services, employment, and educational opportunities is also key to people's well-being. Transportation connects people socially and provides access to leisure and recreational opportunities. Transportation is therefore a key component of the LDP.

Role of the LDP in regard to Transportation

1.5 Whilst transport planning is a function that will remain primarily with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), the new LDP will play an important role in integrating transportation and land-use. DfI will assist the Council in the Development Plan process by preparing Local Transport Plans, which will be focussed around Accessibility Planning. This uses software based on existing transport conditions to identify locations with good accessibility i.e. short/long travel times to key services and good/poor accessibility, and can be applied to travel by car, bus or train. It will assist the LDP in selecting new sites for new housing development in the main towns. Further details are shown in Appendix E.

1.6 As off-street parking is now a local government responsibility, greater weight must be afforded to this in the preparation of the new LDP.

1.7 As part of the LDP, it will also be important to look closely at how greater provision can be made for the use of more sustainable forms of transport such as buses, trains, cycleways and walkways.

2 – Regional Policy Context

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2   Regional Planning Policy Context

2.1   The Regional Policy Context is provided by the Regional Development Strategy
(RDS) 2035 and regional Planning Policy Statements. The RDS was supported by the
Regional Transport Strategy 2002-2012 (RTS) which identified strategic transportation
investment priorities over a 10 year period, and was implemented through three
Transport Plans (paragraph 2.8 refers). The RTS was replaced in 2012 by 'Ensuring
a Sustainable Transport Future' which now guides decisions beyond 2015. However,
the Transport Plans will remain as material considerations until they are replaced by a
new suite of transport plans produced by DfI in association with the Council. It is
anticipated that these arrangements will be contained in the forthcoming Programme
for Government (PfG) when published in its final form.

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)
http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/rds2035.pdf

2.2   The RDS contains Strategic Guidance, which is subdivided into
Regional Guidance (RG) and Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG).
The RDS focuses development in gateways, hubs and clusters,
with prioritising the improvement of the main transport corridors
that form the regional transportation network.

2.3   The RDS identifies Ballymena as a hub, with Larne identified as both a main hub and
gateway. They are highlighted as having the potential to cluster together along with
Antrim. The RDS also highlights that Larne is the second largest port in Northern
Ireland and provides strong linkages with south-west Scotland and road and rail links
forming part of the Trans-European Network Routes from Cork through Dublin and
Belfast to Stranraer. Carrickfergus is identified as having good transport links with
Belfast and Scotland via Larne.

2.4   RG2 of the RDS aims to 'deliver a balanced approach to transport infrastructure'. In
highlights that in order to remain competitive in the global market, it is important to
promote transport which balances the needs of our environment, society and
economy. This focuses on managing the use of our road and air space and using our
network in a better, smarter way. The following approaches will help develop this
further:
- Improve connectivity;
- Maximise the potential of the Regional Strategic Transport Network;
- Use road space and railways more efficiently;
- Improve social inclusion;
- Manage the movement of freight;
- Improve access to our cities and towns; and
- Improve safety by adopting a 'safe systems' approach to road safety.

2.5　RG9 aims to 'reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality'. Mitigation measures include:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport;
- Reduce noise and air pollution; and
- Use more energy efficient forms of transport.

2.6　SFG4 relates to managing the movement of people and goods within the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA). It recognises that transport has a key role to play in developing cities and regions, but also in promoting social inclusion with the provision of affordable alternatives to the private car. The following actions have been listed within SFG4:

- Manage travel demand within the BMUA;
- Improve the public transport service;
- Integrate Land Use and Transportation;
- Introduce a Rapid Transit system;
- Manage the efficient movement of freight; and
- Improve facilities for walking and cycling which is co-ordinated with infrastructure investment.

2.7　In relation to the rural area, SFG 14 aims to improve accessibility for rural communities. It highlights the need to integrate local transport and promote integrated rural transport initiative which meet the needs of those living in isolated areas, and in particular elderly and disabled people.

2.8　SFG15 aims to strengthen gateways for Regional competitiveness. Larne, identified as a Gateway within the RDS should be able to deal with goods and passenger traffic efficiently and be considered as an asset by potential investors and local forms. The following actions have been listed within SFG15:

- Provide high quality connections to and from the air and sea ports;
- Enhance Gateways and their environmental image;

Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-2012 (DRD, 2002)
https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/regional-transportation-strategy-2002-2012

2.9　The RDS 2025 (published 2001) was supported by a 10 year Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-2012. The RTS identified strategic transportation investment priorities and considered potential funding sources and affordability of planned initiatives over the 10 year period. The RTS signalled a move away from a transport system that is dominated by car use towards a more balanced and integrated system. It set out a vision "*To have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone's quality of life*". This vision is still appropriate for the DfI's new approach to regional transportation which will refocus and rebalance our transport priorities and present a fresh direction for transportation with sustainability at its core.

2.10   The delivery of the RTS is now being achieved through three Transport Plans, as indicated below. These contain the detailed programmes of major schemes and transport initiatives that DfI (formerly DRD) wants to carry out to achieve the RTS objectives and targets:

- The Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan;
- The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan;
- The Sub Regional Transport Plan.

"Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future - A New Approach to Regional Transportation" (DRD, 2012)

https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/ensuring-sustainable-transport-future-new-approach-regional-transportation

2.11   Following a review of the RTS, this document sets out the Department of Infrastructure's (DfI) new approach to regional transportation and particularly future decisions on investment. Unlike the RTS, the emphasis of the new approach moves away from specific road building schemes. Rather, it sets three high level aims for transportation along with twelve supporting objectives covering the economy, society and the environment which are as follows:

1. Support the Growth of the Economy
- Improve connectivity within the region;
- Use road space and railways more efficiently;
- Better maintain transport infrastructure;
- Improve access in our towns and cities;
- Improve access in rural areas; and
- Improve connections to key tourism sites

2. Enhance the quality of life for all
- Improve safety;
- Enhance social inclusion; and
- Develop transport programmes focussed on the user

3. Reduce the Environmental Impact of Transport
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport;
- Protect biodiversity; and
- Reduce water, noise and air pollution

2.12   It sets out how regional transportation will be developed after the current transport plans reach their conclusion and will be used to guide future decisions on strategic transportation interventions. DfI will continue to implement the current transport plans until their planned expiry and a new Delivery Plan is published. "Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future - A New Approach to Regional Transportation" is currently the most up to date document on regional transportation.

Transport Plans

2.13   The three Transport Plans will remain as material considerations until they are replaced by a new suite of transport plans which are currently at the project planning stage. The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) will develop new Local Transport Plans in conjunction with Councils' Local Development Plans. DfI have committed to work closely with Councils at all stages of the LDPs development to ensure that transport and land-use planning is undertaken in an integrated and sustainable manner. Similarly, in preparing a new Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan, DfI will assess and prioritise a range of highway and public transport schemes and measures which fit with government and councils' priorities and seek to address significant problems on the railway network and the principal road links.

2.14   The three existing Transport Plans are:

Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 (RSTNTP)
https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/regional-strategic-transport-network-transport-plan-2015

2.15   The RSTNTP will remain a material consideration until replaced by the new suite of transport plans. It covers the complete rail network, five Key Transport Corridors (KTC's), four link corridors, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Corridors and the remainder of the trunk road network. The KTC's are the top tier of the Region's long distance routes connecting the cities and main towns to the major regional gateways and the Belfast Metropolitan Area. The road and rail elements of the RSTN within Mid & East Antrim includes part of:

- The **Eastern Seaboard Corridor** – road and rail links between BMA and Dublin and northward to Larne.
- The **Northern Corridor** – links the BMA to Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Londonderry by road and rail.

Eastern Seaboard Corridor   **Northern Corridor**

2.16   One of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Corridors falls within Mid & East Antrim which is known as the Carrickfergus to Belfast Metropolitan Transport Corridor. None of the four link corridors are located within Mid & East Antrim. Out of the remaining trunk road network, one exists within Mid & East Antrim - the A36 Ballymena to Larne Road.

2.17 The RSTNTP identified Strategic Road Improvements (SRI's) which are major projects where the scheme cost is estimated to exceed £1.0m. The main objectives of SRI's are to remove bottlenecks on the key network where lack of capacity is causing serious congestion, and to improve the environment by providing bypasses to towns situated on the RSTN, relieving the effects of heavy through traffic. In addition to SRI's, the RSTNTP also identifies wide single carriageways schemes. These are single carriageways layouts which give guaranteed overtaking opportunities by providing two lanes in one direction over several kilometres of road, with one lane for opposing traffic.

2.18 The following tables illustrate SRI's and Widened Carriageway Schemes within Mid & East Antrim:

Location (direction of overtaking opportunity)	RSTN Category	Status
A8 Ballynure (Northbound) (partly within Mid & East)	Eastern Seaboard Corridor	Completed

Widened carriageway schemes relevant to Mid & East Antrim. Source RSTNTP 2015

Location	Scheme Description	Status
A8 Belfast – Larne Roundabouts	Town roundabouts (Millbrook and Antiville)	Completed
A26/M2 Ballee Road East (new alignment under Larne Road roundabout	Construction/renewal 1.5km dual carriageway, 2 slip roads (0.3km) of 2 lane width and 1 side road (0.5km)	Completed

SRI schemes within Mid & East Antrim. Source RSTNTP 2015

The Belfast Metropolitan Area Transport Plan 2015 (BMTP)
https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/belfast-metropolitan-transport-plan

2.19 This is the local transport plan for the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA), and comprises the former Carrickfergus District Council area. It will remain a material considerations until replaced by the new suite of transport plans. It was published in 2004 and set out transport proposals for the BMA which were to be implemented by 2015. It acknowledged that the BMA is Northern Ireland's major transport hub and the main transport gateway to the rest of the UK and Europe. The transport network within the BMA is defined as a set of main transport corridors, referred to as "*Metropolitan Transport Corridors*", and as indicated in para 2.15, one of these is the Carrickfergus to Belfast Metropolitan Transport Corridor.

2.20 This plan includes a number of proposals for Carrickfergus, which can be categorised as:
• Improve accessibility to Belfast and the rest of the BMA;
• Encourage greater use of public transport and more walking and cycling and reduce the use of car for local journeys in the Carrickfergus area;
• Directly support the planned expansion of Carrickfergus; and
• Maintain and enhance the urban environment and economic vitality of Carrickfergus, recognising its special characteristics as a tourist destination.

Sub Regional Transport Plan 2015 (SRTP)

https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/drd/sub-regional-transport-plan.pdf

2.21   The SRTP was launched on 11th June 2007 and is based upon the guidance provided by the RDS and RTS. It covers the area outside the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA), and deals with the main transportation issues in rural and other urban areas, including Ballymena and Larne.

2.22   Within the SRTP, area transport conditions in each of the 29 towns and cities were examined by Local Transport Studies, including studies for Ballymena and Larne.
https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/srtp-technical-supplement-ballymena-borough-council.pdf
https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/srtp-technical-supplement-larne-borough-council.pdf

2.23   Each Local Transport Study had gathered data from a range of sources and carried out surveys in the town or city to get an independent view on the transport conditions. Whilst the scale of problems and specific needs vary considerably between towns and cities, the Local Transport Studies found, in general, a number of common problems, including:
- Variability in the standard of provision for pedestrians;
- Limited provision for cyclists;
- Underdeveloped local bus networks, unattractive to potential users;
- Limited provision for people with disabilities or others with reduced mobility;
- Localised traffic congestions in the peak periods; and
- Limited enforcement of parking regulations in advance of the decriminalised parking enforcement.

2.24   The SRTP proposes a number of measures which represent a substantial improvement in local transport provision in the 29 towns/cities, and whilst the proposals vary according to the individual circumstances, there are a number of features common to the majority of towns/cities. The measures relate to walking, cycling, highways, parking and public transport.

2.25   All of these plans are relevant to Mid & East Antrim, and contain detailed programmes of major schemes and transport initiatives that the Department of Infrastructure (DfI) intended to carry out to achieve the objectives and targets of the former RTS. The Transport Plans link with relevant Development Plans and thus provide Northern Ireland with an integrated approach to transportation and land use planning.

2.26   The 'Accessible Transport Strategy for NI', originally published in 2005 to complement the RTS, is currently being updated by DfI to meet the key aims of the RTS's successor document 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation'. It is currently published in draft form and can be found at:
https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/drd/accessible-transport-strategy-consultation-2025.pdf

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland – Planning for Sustainable Development (SPPS)
http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/spps_28_september_2015-3.pdf

2.27   The SPPS, launched in September 2015, contains seven policy objectives for transportation and land-use planning which are:
- Promote sustainable patterns of development which reduce the need for motorised transport, encourages active travel, and facilitate travel by public transport in preference to the private car;
- Ensure accessibility for all, with all the needs of people with disabilities and other whose mobility is impaired given particular consideration;
- Promote the provision of adequate facilities for cyclists in new development;
- Promote parking policies that will assist in reducing reliance on the private car and help tackle growing congestion;
- Protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse;
- Restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes; and
- Promote road safety, in particular for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

2.28   The SPPS states that the preparation of a Local Development Plan (LDP) provides the opportunity to assess the transport needs, problems and opportunities within the plan area and to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to transportation issues in the allocation of land for future development. It also states that Councils should take account of the 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation' document and any subsequent transport plans.

2.29   The SPPS also states that LDPs should be informed by a local transport study to address the following transportation issues:
- Land use allocations and associated transport infrastructure;
- New Transport Schemes, Walking and Cycling;
- Disused Transport Routes;
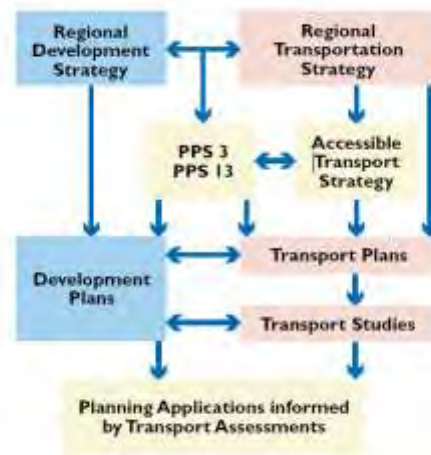- Car Parking;
- Protected Routes.

Planning Policy Statement 13 (PPS13) – Transportation and Land Use
http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/planning_statements_and_supplementary_planning_guidance/pps_13_transportation_and_land_use-2.pdf

2.30   PPS13 was prepared to assist in the implementation of the RDS. It guides the integration of transportation and land use, particularly through the preparation of development plans and transport plans. It is also a material consideration in dealing with individual planning applications and appeals.

2.31   The primary objective of PPS13 is to integrate land use planning and transport by:
- Promoting sustainable transport choices;

- Promoting accessibility for all; and

- Reducing the need to travel, especially by private car.

2.32 This objective will be persued through the General Principles set out in the PPS which include the role of development plans and transport plans in promoting road safety, limiting access to protected routes, providing adequate parking provision and promoting a shift to sustainable transport modes.

2.33 The relationship between this PPS and other parts of the land use and transportation planning system is illustrated in the following diagram.

Source: PPS13

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) – Access, Movement and Parking
http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/planning_statements_and_supplementary_planning_guidance/pps03-access-parking.pdf

2.34 PPS3 sets out the planning policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes and parking. It forms an important element in the integration of transport and land use planning. The main objectives of PPS3 are to:

- Promote road safety, in particular, for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users;
- Restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes;
- Make efficient use of road space within the context of promoting modal shifts to more sustainable forms of transport;
- Ensure that new development offers a realistic choice of access by walking, cycling and public transport, recognising that this may be less achievable in some rural areas;
- Ensure the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired, are taken into account in relation to accessibility to buildings and parking provision;
- Promote the provision of adequate facilities for cyclists in new development;
- Promote parking policies that will assist in reducing reliance in the private car and help tackle growing congestion; and

- Protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse.

Development Control Advice Note 15 (DCAN 15)
http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/supplementary_guidance/dcans/dcan15-vehicular-access.pdf

2.36   The purpose of DCAN15 is to give general guidance to intending developers, their professional advisors, and agents on the standards for vehicular access. It sets out and explains those standards contained in PPS3 and is a material consideration for planning applications and appeals.

Creating Places
http://www.planningni.gov.uk/downloads/creating-places.pdf

2.37   This guidance document is intended to help developers achieve high quality and greater sustainability in the design of new residential developments in Northern Ireland, and incorporated guidance on car/pedestrian/cycle/bus routes, footways/verges/footpaths/cycle tracks, carriageways, visibility, speed restraints, shared surfaces and parking.

3 - Local Policy Context

Development Plans and Transport Plan

Mid & East Antrim
Borough Council

3   Local Planning Policy Context

Ballymena Area Plan 1986 – 2001

3.1   The Ballymena Area Plan contains a section relating to transportation. In regards to roads, the plan highlights a number of completed road improvements as well as proposed road schemes, the majority of which were in and around Ballymena town.

3.2   Several of these works have been completed, however some of the major road schemes shown within the Plan have not yet been delivered, including the Ballymena South West Distributor Road and the Cullybackey by-pass (illustrated below).

3.3   The plan acknowledged that the area is served by bus and train services.
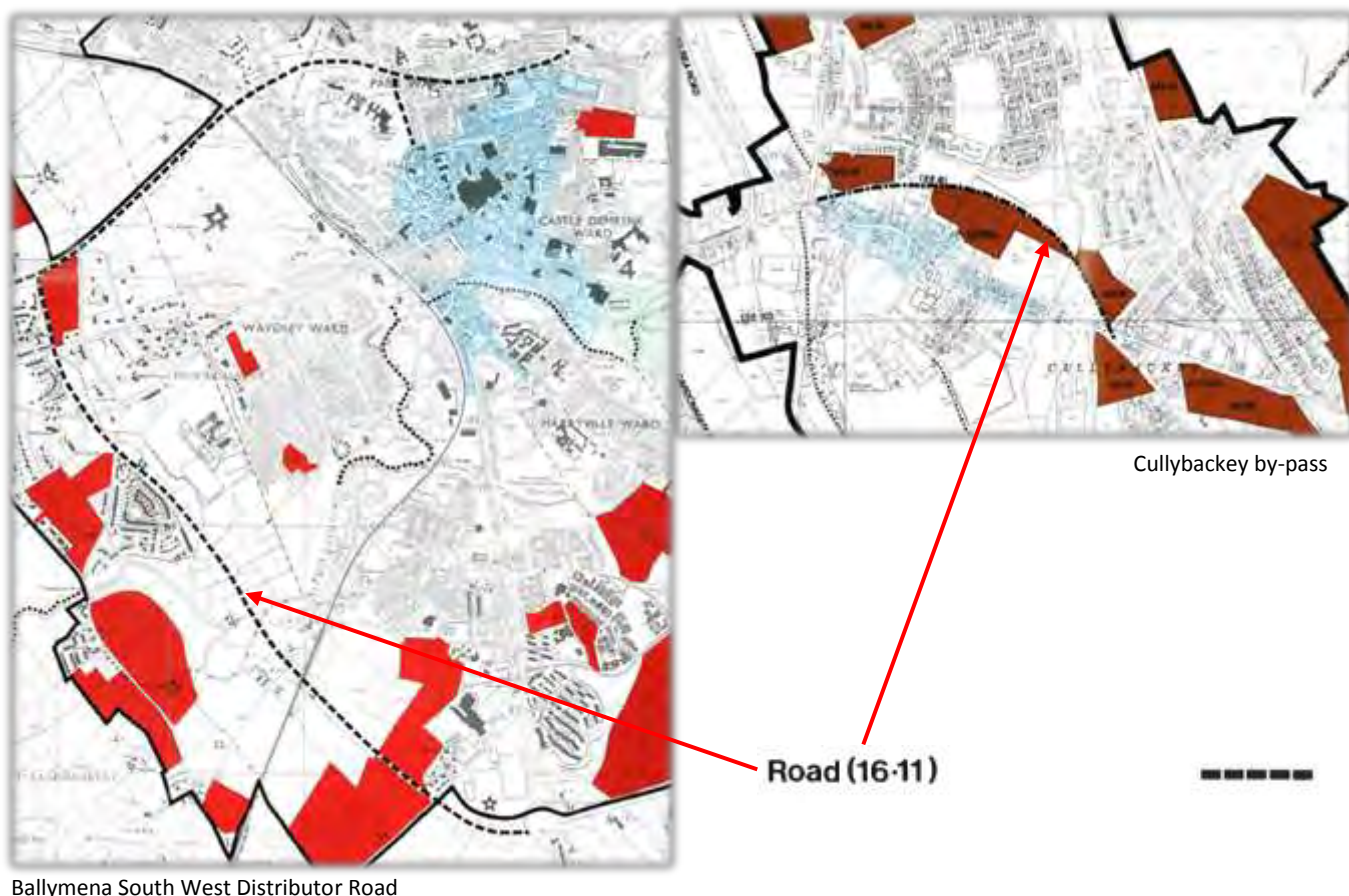
Cullybackey by-pass

Road (16·11)

Ballymena South West Distributor Road

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP)

3.4   BMAP superseded the Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001. BMAP acknowledged that the A2 Shore Road (Marine Highway) and the B90 Upper Road/Old Carrick Road are the principal roads which provide access to Carrickfergus. It also highlighted that part of the A2 was due to be upgraded, with this upgrade completed in 2015.

3.5   The plan identifies three non-strategic road schemes to support development proposals within Carrickfergus and highlights that developers will be responsible for funding the scheme either in full or in a substantial part. They are listed and highlighted below:

- Carrickfergus Spine Road;
- Victoria Road; and
- Sloefield Road
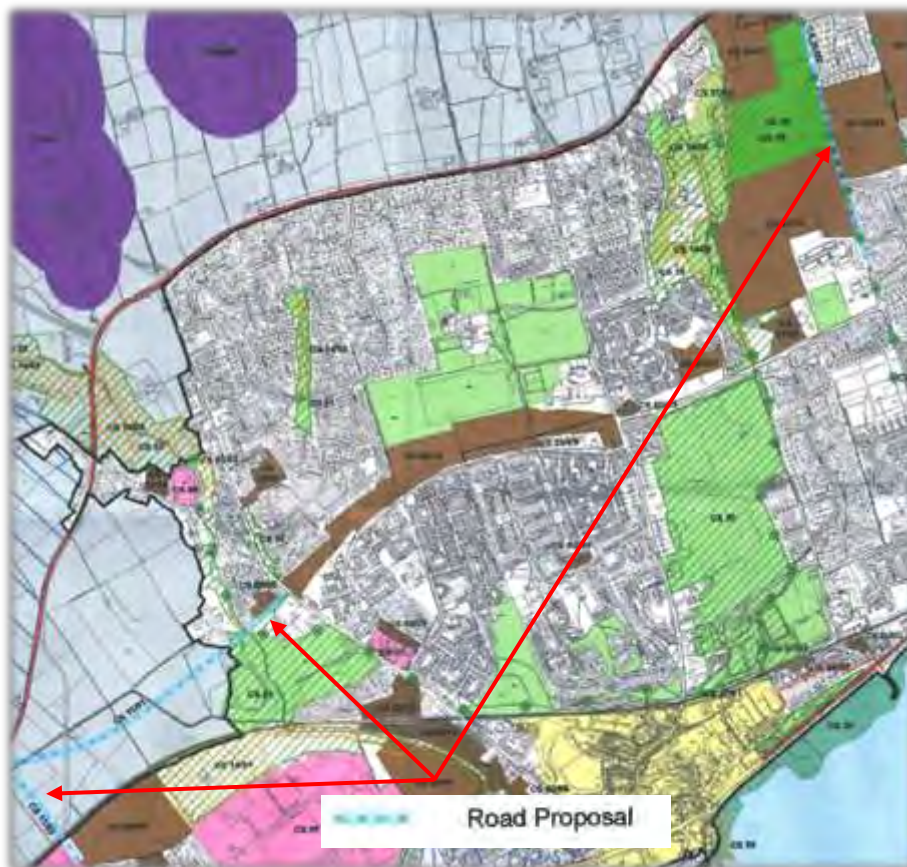
Non-Strategic Road Schemes in Carrickfergus town

3.6   BMAP highlights that the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) proposes a number of transportation initiatives within the Mid and East Antrim including:

- Improvement of rail services,
- Development of a Quality Bus Corridor;
- £21.8m for the introduction of Intelligent Transport Systems solutions (including Real Time Passenger Information and Integrated Ticketing on Public Transport,

Travel Information Dissemination Systems (through internet, social media and other media outlets), Variable Message Signing (for drivers regarding travel times, delays, reduced speed limits or lane closures), & Available Parking Guidance Systems);

- Roll out of a route management system along the A2 Shore Road; and
- Greater use of public transport and more walking and cycling to reduce car dependency.

3.7   BMAP also highlighted that the Greenisland section of the A2 between Ravenhill and Silverstream was identified by the BMTP as a bottleneck on the BMA strategic network with significant congestion at peak times. An upgrade of this section of the A2 to four lanes was completed in 2015 and followed the indicative route illustrated below.


Route of A2 upgrade at Greenisland

Larne Area Plan 2010

3.8   The Larne Area Plan 2010 acknowledged that people in the area tend to rely on the car for their day to day transportation needs, and that the main public transport facilities are buses and trains. The plan included five policies and proposals in relation to transportation:

- **TR1**: The provision of new roads and/or road improvements to facilitate traffic movement;
- **TR2**: Restricting new and intensification of accesses onto the four protected routes within the district;
- **TR3**: Traffic impact assessments may be required to accompany applications depending on their nature and scale;
- **TR4**: The provision of distributor roads to facilitate housing within the Larne West area, as shown in the extract from the Larne West Development Strategy (1991) below:
- **TR5**: The provision of full, operational car parking.
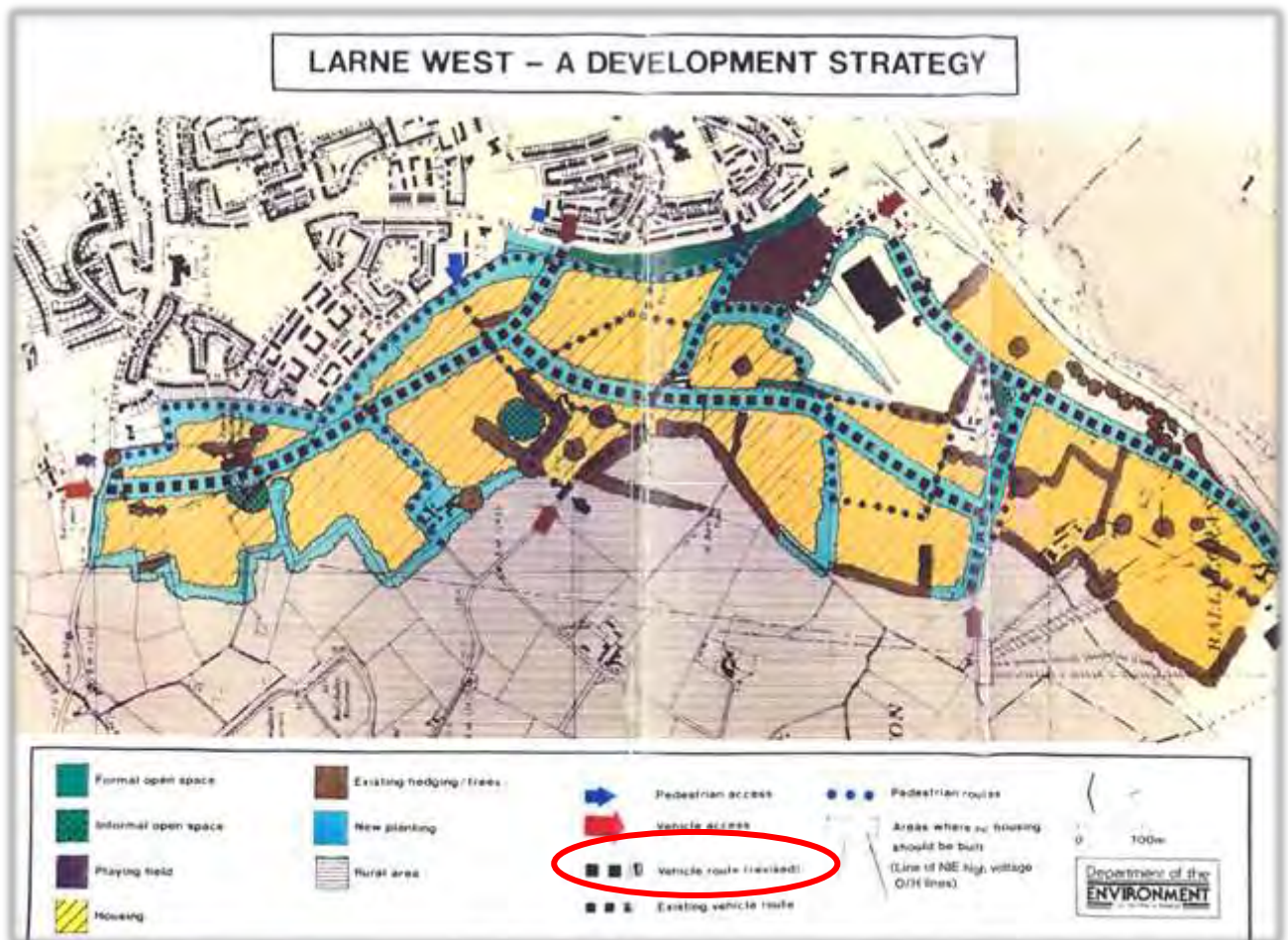
Town Centre Masterplans

Ballymena Town Centre Masterplan (April 2009)
http://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/downloads/ballymena-masterplan.pdf

3.9   The Ballymena Town Centre Masterplan (published by the former DSD) was informed by a detailed information gathering process and analysis. It includes a transportation analysis of walking, cycling, public transport and car usage.

3.10   One of the strengths identified was high pedestrian movement within the retail core. However, pedestrian links within the town centre varied in standard, convenience and environmental quality. Signage was considered poor, with footpaths suffering from obstructions including advertising signage.

3.11   There are a limited number of cycle paths, with a lack of cycling connectivity to the town centre and local centres of employment. The provision of cycling facilities and parking was also considered to be poor.

3.12   There was considered to be good availability of local and strategic public transport, with the bus and rail station park and ride facility proving very successful.

3.13   The dominance of vehicles was highlighted as a major weakness in the town centre owing to a complex and inflexible circulatory route. Key junctions at North Road/Galgorm Road and Bridge Street/Larne Road Link experience commuter related congestion. Church Street also experiences significant traffic routing in preference to using Parkway/North Road. There are high levels of on street parking, with additional off street car parking (now operated by Mid and East Antrim Council) considered often difficult to find and navigate.

3.14   The Masterplan set out a series of regeneration and general town centre initiatives, coupled with regeneration initiatives focused on the four key areas of Bridge Street & Braid River, Galgorm Road, Alexander & Springwell Street, and St. Patricks Barracks.

3.15   The general town centre initiatives set out several transport related measures. These included:
- Accessibility strategy to improve town centre accessibility;
- Cycle provision programme to realise a cohesive cycle network linking Town Centre, adjacent neighbourhoods and open space; and
- Transport assessment to understand current traffic system;

3.16   In relation to the regeneration initiatives and transportation, an onus is placed on enhancing pedestrian and cycling connectivity.

Larne Town Centre Masterplan (June 2010)
http://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/downloads/larne_masterplan_report_1.pdf

3.17   The Larne Town Centre Masterplan (DSD) identified strategic elements to support the regeneration of the Town Centre. It was informed by a baseline report comprising of an economic analysis, transport assessment, stakeholder consultation and a Retail and Leisure Capacity study.

3.18   The Masterplan highlighted several transportation issues within the Town Centre.
- The Harbour Highway as a strategic road link requires environmental and signage improvements;
- Accessibility to the Main Street is difficult owing to the enclosed nature of the town centre;
- Main Street experiences congestion owing to concentrations of cars, buses, taxis and parking;
- Pedestrian paving is narrow;
- Over provision of charged and free car parking on the periphery of the town centre;
- Lack of legibility and connectivity between peripheral car parks and town centre;
- Poor connectivity between the town centre and existing rail and bus stations; and
- Under-utilisation of public transport.

3.19   The Masterplan transportation strategy identified the following key objectives:
- To better connect the Harbour Highway with the town centre;

- Improve the traffic system in the town core;
- Reduce the dominance of the road system in the Waterfront area;
- Better prioritise public transport and pedestrian provision; and
- Provide strategically located parking.

3.20   In order to achieve the transportation strategy, the Masterplan devised three action plans consisting of key projects to be rolled out in 3 phases.
- Phase 1 Transportation Improvements
  - ➢ Relocation of bus station and ticketing facilities adjacent to Larne Railway Station;
  - ➢ Road improvements to rationalise parking provision and improve pedestrian priority on Main Street.
- Phase 2 Transportation Improvements:
  - ➢ Construction of new roundabout at main junction between Harbour Highway and town centre
  - ➢ Rationalisation of parking layout.
  - ➢ Development of cycle shop/hire.
- Phase 3 Transportation Improvements:
  - ➢ Reconfiguration of Circular Road.

Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan (July 2010)
https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dsd/carrickfergus-masterplan.PDF

3.21   The Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan (July 2010) identified several strengths and weaknesses. Weaknesses included:
- The Marine Highway, town walls and railway line are significant barriers to pedestrian movement;
- The Marine Highway generates significant traffic volumes; and
- Large areas of car parking to the south of the town centre which create a non-pedestrian environment.

3.22   The masterplan identified a series of key transportation policies to contribute to the regeneration of the town centre.
- Promotion of active travel (walking and cycling):
  - ➢ Provide greater walking and cycling links to and from the town centre; and
  - ➢ Promotion of linear parks or greenways.
- Promotion of public transport:
  - ➢ Improve local bus services between the town centre and residential areas to the north of the town; and
  - ➢ Improve rail station facilities with increased park and ride provision.
- Reduction in motorised transport:
  - ➢ Reduction in the width of the Marine Highway;
  - ➢ 30mph speed limit on the Marine Highway; and
  - ➢ Support the delivery Carrickfergus Spine Road to reduce the severance of traffic on the Marine Highway.
- Implementation of a car parking strategy:

> ➤ Reduce long term car parking, including the displacement of long term car parking within close walking distance at the edge of the town centre;
> ➤ Provision of a number of large public car parks;
> ➤ Improving signage to car parking areas; and
> ➤ Maintenance of a parking management strategy to regulate short stay parking.

3.23 Several long term proposals were also identified through the Masterplan:
- The replacement of Irish Street junction with a traffic signal junction, pedestrian crossing and removal of access to the harbour area;
- New access into harbour area at the Davy Street junction; and
- Installation of traffic signal control at Marine Highway and Rogers Quay.

3.24 Although the majority of proposals contained within the Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne masterplans are long term in nature and have yet to be implemented, all three towns have undergone major town centre public realm schemes. These schemes have improved pedestrian accessibility, the overall pedestrian environment and rationalised the provision of town centre on-street car parking.

4 – Transportation Profile in Mid and East Antrim

Mid & East
Antrim
Borough Council

4   Transportation Profile in Mid & East Antrim

4.1   There are various public and private bodies involved in providing transport infrastructure and services throughout Northern Ireland. The Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) strategic objectives are to maintain, manage and develop NI's transportation network, DfI is responsible for formulating the Regional Transport Strategy, whilst TransportNI is responsible for its implementation through the delivery of road maintenance services and the management and development of the transport network, including public roads, footways, bridges and street lights etc.

4.2   Mid & East Antrim has a comprehensive network of transport infrastructure and services. There is an extensive network of roads ranging from major strategic routes to minor rural roads. In addition, there is an extensive footpath system in most designated settlements, with elements of the National Cycle Network also passing through the Borough.

4.3   Public transport provision consists of a network of urban and rural bus services, the three towns and several villages throughout the Borough are served by the NI Railways network.

4.4   The following section now outlines the main features of the existing transportation provision within Mid and East Antrim.

Road Network

4.5   Transportation in the Council area is primarily provided by the road network. The A26 is identified in the RDS as a Link Corridor (as shown in the following diagram) which connects Ballymena to Coleraine and the north, Antrim to the south, and links on to the M2 Ballymena By-Pass. The A36 (Moorfields Road/Shanes Hill Road) links Ballymena to Larne. The A8 is a Key Transport Corridor extending from the Port of Larne towards Newtownabbey, then joins the M2 with onward connections to Belfast. The M2 and M5 also link from Belfast onto the A2 Shore Road which extends from Whiteabbey, through Greenisland & Carrickfergus and onward to Larne.

Source: RDS 2035

4.6   In 2015, major road dualling schemes were completed on both the A8 Belfast-Larne Road, and the A2 Shore Road at Greenisland. As the A8 is the principle route from Belfast to Larne, dualling will provide a more efficient route to and from the Port of Larne. The widening of the A2 in Greenisland will alleviate the bottleneck and delays previously experienced along this section of the road on a daily basis. There is currently one major road scheme still under construction within Mid and East Antrim. The £55m project dualling 8km of the A26 Crankill Road at Glarryford to the A44 Drones Road (Ballycastle junction) is scheduled to be completed by summer 2017.

4.7   The Council area accommodates approximately 987km of road length, which accounts for approx. 6.4% of the total road length of Northern Ireland. The table below illustrates the various road types within Mid & East Antrim.

	Northern Ireland km	Mid & East Antrim km (% of NI)	Ballymena km (% of NI)	Carrickfergus km (% of NI)	Larne km (% of NI)
Roads Length	25507.20	1728.8 (6.78%)	1012.1 (3.97%)	227.9 (0.89%)	488.8 (1.92%)
Motorway	114.90	7.3 (6.35%)	7.3 (6.35%)	0	0
Dual carriageway	210.20	26.3 (12.51%)	19.1 (9.09%)	1.2 (0.57%)	6 (2.85%)
"A" Road (single carriage)	2079.20	162.8 (7.83%)	76.3 (3.67%)	15.7 (0.76%)	70.8 (3.41%)
"B" Road	2093.80	236.3 (11.29)	130.7 (6.24%)	29.9 (1.43%)	75.7 (3.62%)
"C" Road	4724.90	308.8 (6.54%)	192.7 (4.08%)	18.7 (0.40%)	97.4 (2.06%)

| Unclassified | 15474.20 | 987.3 (6.38%) | 586 (3.79%) | 162.3 (1.05%) | 239 (1.54%) |

Protected Routes

4.8   There are a number of Protected Routes designated within Mid & East Antrim, some of which extend into other Council areas. These are listed in the table below and also illustrated in the Appendix A. Protected Routes are identified in the Development Plan for information only. The designation of protected routes is not within the remit of the Local Development Plan.

| District	Protected Route	Road Details
Mid and East Antrim	M2	Crankill Road Junction – Larne Road Roundabout, Ballymena
	A2	Larne – Carrickfergus - Belfast
	A8	Larne Harbour – Mallusk (Sandyknowes)
	A26	Coleraine – Ballymoney – Ballymena – Antrim - Moira
	A36	Ballymena - Larne
	A42	Ballymena - Maghera
	B90	Whitehead –Greenisland - Glengormley
	U2077	Ballymena South West Distributor

Protected Routes within Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Area

Modes of Travel

4.9   The main modes of travel used within Mid & East Antrim and across NI are private car, public transport, walking and cycling. According to the DRD/NISRA Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2013-2015 (TSNI), car journeys accounted for 72% of all journeys made, which constituted to just over four fifths (81%) of total distance travelled. In 2013-2015, 5% of all journeys were made by public transport (Ulsterbus, Metro, Other Bus, Northern Ireland Railways and Public Taxi), which accounted for 8% of total distance travelled. Walking accounted for 18% of all journeys in 2013-2015 and 3% of total distance travelled.

Private Car

4.10   The TSNI also illustrates that the car was the most commonly used main mode of transport for both men (69%) and women (75%) in NI. The 2011 Census illustrates that approximately 81% of households in Mid & East Antrim own one or more private vehicles, with it therefore envisaged that car travel will remain the dominant mode of transportation over the Plan period. This is illustrated in the figure below and in Appendix B.

% HOUSEHOLDS OWNING PRIVATE VEHICLES
IN MID AND EAST ANTRIM

4+ Car/Van
3%

3 Car/Van
7%

No Car/Van
19%

2 Car/Van
29%
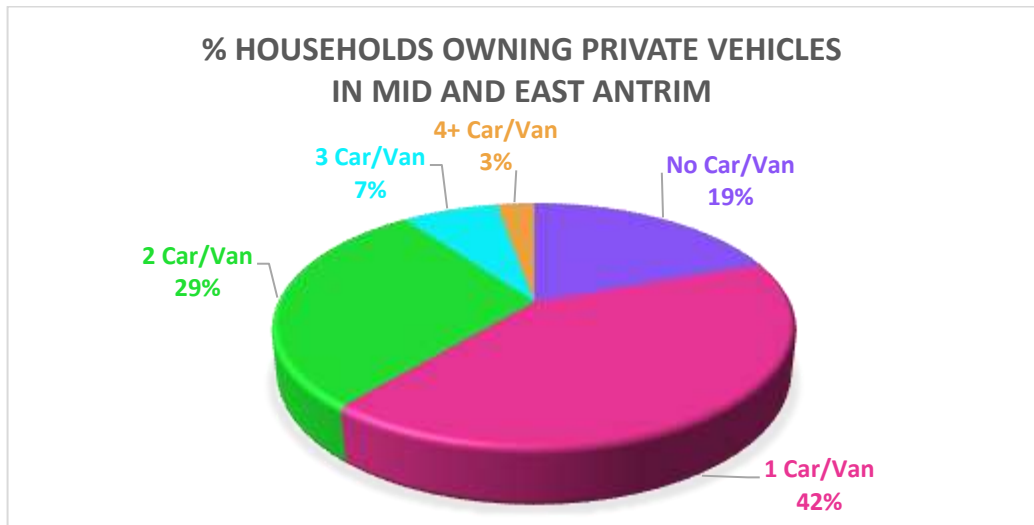
1 Car/Van
42%

Source: Census 2011

4.11   The Census 2011 shows that of the 59,235 residents in employment in the Mid & East Antrim Local Government District (LGD), 75.83% travelled to work by car/van (this includes those driving (60.23%), travelling as a passenger (5.59%) or as part of a car pool (10.01%). This is shown in the Figure below and in Appendix C.
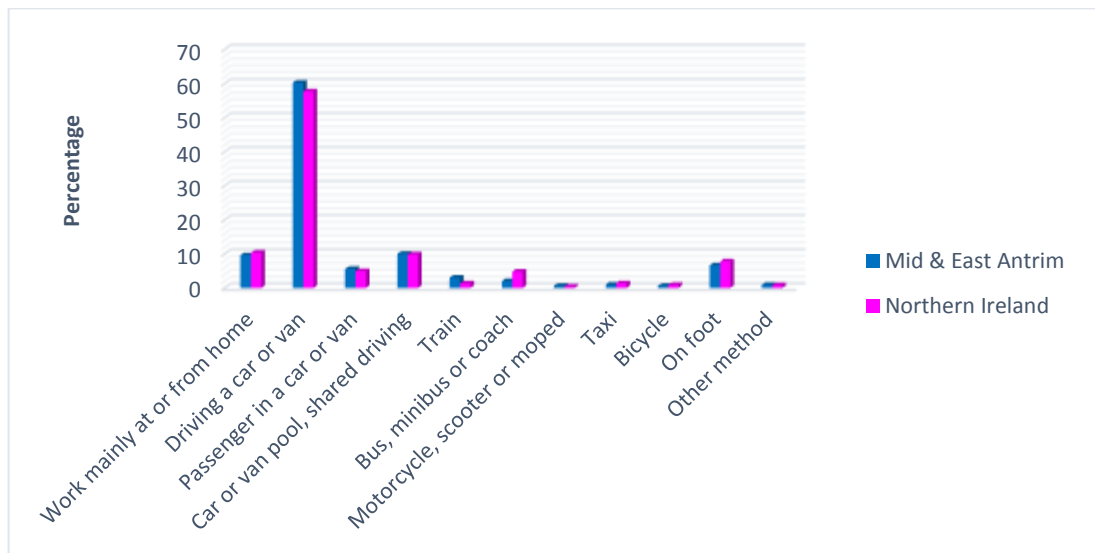
Method of transportation to work: Source: Census 2011 Table

All usual residents aged 16 to 74 (excluding students) in employment and currently working in the area	Percentage
Work mainly at or from home	12%
No fixed place	13%
Less than 2km	17%
2km to less than 5km	15%
5km to less than 10km	12%
10km to less than 20km	14%
20km to less than 30km	8%
30km to less than 40km	5%
40km to less than 60km	3%
60km and over	1%

Source: Census 2011

4.12   Within Mid and East Antrim, 17% of residents who are in employment (excluding students) travel less than 2km to work, with 15% travelling between 2km-5km and less than 5% of residents travelling more than 40km. The above table shows the travel to work distances.

4.13   Almost 76% of residents use car/vans as their main method to travel to work. Given that the majority (58%) of journeys of residents working within the Borough are less the 20km, there is a clear overreliance on this mode of transport.

4.14   The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has produced accessibility maps for the main towns in Mid and East Antrim showing private car drive times at peak times - these are included in Appendix E.

Public Transport

4.15   The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has overall responsibility for public transport policy and transport in Northern Ireland, as well as being responsible for the safety and operating standards of road passenger transport providers.

4.16   The Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) oversees the provision of public transport in Northern Ireland, under the subsidiary brand name 'Translink', and cover the integrated services of Ulsterbus, Metro and Northern Ireland Railways.

4.17   Within Mid and East Antrim, there are bus stations in both Larne and Ballymena. Public bus services within the Council area are provided primarily by Translink/Ulsterbus, and timetables are illustrated within Appendix F.

4.18   In addition to bus services, Mid & East Antrim is also served by the NI Railways network. Both Ballymena and Cullybackey have train stations along the Belfast – Londonderry line which also facilitates links to Coleraine and Portrush. There are also several train stations throughout Carrickfergus and Larne districts which provide a key

link to Belfast City Centre and beyond. Many of these train stations benefit from the provision of free park and ride car parking.

4.19   As previously mentioned, with nearly one in five households in Mid & East Antrim not owning a private vehicle, the availability of public transport is a key service particularly for those who are elderly or economically or socially disadvantaged. It is also an essential service for children who rely on buses or trains to travel to school. In addition, the Census 2011 shows that of residents in employment within Mid & East Antrim, just under 5% travelled to work using public transport (bus/rail).

4.20   These figures highlight that whilst there is a need for public transport, it is underutilised. The TSNI found that 64% of those travelling to work by car said that their journey was not possible by public transport with 25% citing both poor connections and 25% too far/long journey time by public transport as reasons for not using public transport. A number of rural dwellers within Mid & East Antrim are likely to fall into this category.

4.21   DfI has produced accessibility maps showing Public Transport accessibility for peak times within the main towns in Mid and East Antrim. 'The Accessibility Analyses maps highlight areas with high (and low) levels of accessibility in relation to our urban centres. The maps use colour coding to show travel times to the urban centres and hence high (short travel times) and low (long travel times) accessibility. The maps show that travel times by public transport are not related simply to distance – i.e. some locations much further from the urban centre can have travel times much less than locations much closer. This is due to the spread of the bus and rail networks and how the timetables interconnect'. These maps are included in Appendix G.

Car parking

4.22   On-street parking across the Council area is managed by TransportNI. A parking strategy has been implemented to make best use of on-street parking provision in the main towns by providing restricted waiting/parking close to each town centre, with

longer duration unrestricted parking further away from town centre. There are no current plans to introduce on street pay and display parking

4.23 Until 31st March 2015, Transport NI were responsible for car parking including ticketing, enforcement, maintenance and tariff setting. Transport NI implemented proposals to maximise the utilisation of the existing parking provision in the main towns and devised parking strategies to provide convenient short stay car parking close to each town centre with longer stay parking located further out. Where practical, parking has also been proposed convenient to bus stations to encourage public transport use by commuters.

4.24 Since 1st April 2015 off-street car parking transferred to become the responsibility of local councils. Mid & East Antrim Borough Council is now responsible for 27 off street car parks which are mainly located in the three towns, as well as within Ahoghill and Whitehead – as seen in the table below. These car parks comprise a mixture of pay-and-display and free-parking formats. More detail of these is contained in Appendix H.

Off Street Car Parks Spaces	
Town	Total Number of Car Parking Spaces
Ballymena (includes 84 in Galgorm)	2089
Larne	720
Carrickfergus	251
Ahoghill	93
Whitehead	23
TOTAL	3176

4.25 The Technical Supplements for the Sub Regional Transport Plan for Ballymena and Larne illustrated that on a typical weekday Ballymena had 70% of on and off street parking spaces occupied, and Larne had 64%.

4.26 In addition there are also a number of other 'publicly available' car parks that are privately owned – though primarily for customer use.

Park & Ride/Park & Share

4.27 There are a number of Park & Ride and Park & Share car parks throughout the Borough (see Appendix I & J).

Ecars

4.28 Electric vehicles are revolutionising the way people think about cars. With no tail-pipe CO2 (carbon dioxide) emissions, the electric car is a step towards a more sustainable future. Pure electric vehicles use no petrol and no diesel.

4.29   ecarNI has introduced an electric vehicle charging infrastructure to Northern Ireland. The introduction of this infrastructure means that 160 electric vehicle charging points are now installed in many towns and cities across Northern Ireland, including 16 throughout Mid & East Antrim. Refer to Appendix K for a list of these.

Taxi services

4.30   Taxi services provide an important and expanding transport service throughout most areas of Mid & East Antrim particularly in the main towns.

'Active Travel'

4.31   Given that many of the journeys made within towns are short journeys, there is a significant potential for increasing the level of 'active travel' such as cycling and walking.

4.32   Key government priorities for growing a sustainable economy and improving health and well-being, will be achieved in part through promoting a modal shift from private car usage to walking and cycling.

4.33   Economic benefits will accrue by reducing congestion, while reduced vehicle emissions and increased services will improve public health and well-being.

4.34   As part of a wider programme of work to develop more sustainable transport arrangements, a Cross Sectional Active Travel Forum was established by DRD in March 2010. Drawing representation from across government departments, local government, the voluntary and community sector, and the private sector, the Forum was tasked with developing a high level strategy for Active Travel. The Action Plan for Active Travel was produced in 2013 and aims to put walking and cycling at the heart of our local transport arrangements. http://www.nienvironmentlink.org/cmsfiles/policy-hub/files/documentation/Trans/54344-An-Action-Plan-for-Active-Travel.pdf

4.35   LDPs should take account of this and set aside land for the provision of good quality, connected on and off-road walking and cycling routes through residential areas, linking to town centres, bus and train stations and other important services.

4.36   The Translink Strategy 'Get on Board' highlights that public transport plays a central role in encouraging more active travel as most journeys require a walk or cycle to a bus or train station. This can not only link to public health policy, but can transform cities into greener, more prosperous places to live, visit and do business.

Cycling

4.37   The TSNI illustrates that 36% of households in Northern Ireland owned at least one bicycle. Despite this, less than 1% of journeys per person per year were by bicycle, and only 0.5% of people cycle to work.

4.38   The Cycling Unit in DfI was established in 2013. It provides a focus and co-ordinating role for cycling issues and cycling related activities. The Cycling Unit (DfI) plans to develop a number of Bicycle Network Plans for the urban areas within Northern Ireland which is focused on developing convenient access to safe cycling facilities. They will be involved in taking forward plans to develop good-quality dedicated cycling infrastructure within the main towns of Mid and East Antrim.

4.39   In August 2015 the 'Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland' https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/bicycle-strategy-northern-ireland was launched, with its vision as "A community where people have the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle for every day journeys". The strategy promotes the development of a three pillar approach for the development of cycling which includes building a comprehensive cycle network, supporting those who wish to cycle, and promoting the bike as a mode of everyday transport.

4.40   The Bicycle Strategy, along with the Active Travel Strategy, will assist with the aim of making it easier to walk and cycle and will encourage a modal shift. The Bicycle Strategy will be supported by a Bicycle Strategy Delivery Plan which will outline specific time bound actions to realise this vision

4.41   The Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland aims to set out progressively how Northern Ireland can be transformed into a place where travelling by bicycle is a healthy, every day activity. In promoting the bicycle as an attractive mode of transport, the Strategy aims to help those who choose to cycle by:
- Having high quality infrastructure which promotes greater priority for the bicycle;
- Providing secure cycle parking where it is required;
- Developing bicycle hubs;
- Promoting the 'Cycle to work' scheme to employers;
- Promoting e-bikes; and
- Public bike hire schemes.

4.42   It plans to develop specific interventions particular to both the urban and rural contexts and to measure their impact through the use of pilot schemes. For example, it is proposed that in the rural area to pilot the use of greenways which suggested routes being old railway beds or banks.

4.43   TravelwiseNI is an initiative to encourage the use of sustainable transport options such as walking, cycling, public transport or car sharing. The Travelwise Team form an integral part of the Cycling Unit and continues to promote all sustainable options

through supporting events, media campaigns and awareness programmes in partnership with schools and businesses.

4.44   At local level, DfI TransportNI is responsible for implementation of the infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling along the public highway. Other Departments also play a role, for example, the Department of Education has been involved in encouraging "Safer Routes to School".

4.45   Voluntary and community organisations also have a role to play. The largest of these is Sustrans which is an independent charity which works with TransportNI, local authorities and other organisations and help promote the cycling infrastructure, particularly the National Cycle Network. These organisations also work with schools, communities, workplaces and policy makers to promote cycling, as well as walking and public transport, as realistic alternatives to the car for everyday journeys. Detail of the National Cycle Network within Mid & East Antrim is illustrated below:

Source www.cycleni.com

4.46   DfI has produced maps showing Cycling Accessibility for the main towns within Mid and East Antrim - these are included in Appendix L.

Walking

4.47   Walking is facilitated throughout the urban areas of Mid & East Antrim by the footways along the road network. Some of these are designated as 'Highways to Health' schemes established by the Department of Health across Northern Ireland. (see Appendix M)

4.48 Additionally several dedicated recreational walkways, mainly along the river corridors, also facilitate pedestrian movement within the towns and villages. There are also several sections of the Ulster Way within the Borough (see Appendix N). The 2011 census indicates that just under 4,000 people (excluding students) in Mid & East Antrim walk to work which equates to 6.63%.

4.49 DfI has produced maps showing Cycling Accessibility for the main towns within Mid and East Antrim - these are included in Appendix O.

Greenways

4.50 'Greenways' are linear parks focused on a walking trail or bicycle path which are frequently created out of a disused railway, canal towpath, or utility right of way.

4.51 The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) is due to publish 'Strategic Plan for Greenways'. This will provide a framework whereby local authorities may draw up their own projects and seek funding, to develop green infrastructure planning and the implementation of sensible, sustainable routes across the region.

4.52 It will identify the initial routes which should be explored to develop a primary greenway network from which a secondary greenway networks could then be established across the entire Region. It is hoped this strategy will endorse the development of a greenway network along Northern Ireland's disused railways network as seen in the schematic below.

Source: www.nigreenways.com

4.53   In March 2016, the then DRD Minister announced a small grants programme for the development of greenway projects across Northern Ireland. The scheme was aimed at providing support for councils to work up projects will deliver a step change in greenway provision.

4.54   The development of the greenway network is seen as an important feature within Mid and East Antrim. Within the Council area, there are potential routes between Larne and Ballymena, between Ballymena and Cargan (and beyond) and also from Ballymena towards Kilrea.

Disused Transport Routes

4.55   There is a disused railway line in Greenisland which travels west to Monkstown. The Greenisland Development Framework, a non-statutory masterplan, highlights this railway line as an opportunity to develop as a car free, cycling and walking route linking Greenisland to Monkstown. However, it does acknowledge that the re-use of the line must be achieved without prejudice to the long term aspiration of Translink to re-instate the rail line if ever needed.
http://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/downloads/greenisland-development_framework.pdf.

4.56   In addition there is also a disused narrow gauge railway between Ballymena and Larne. This travelled *via* Kilwaughter, Headwood, Ballyboley, Ballynashee, Collin, Moorfields, Kells and Harryville, with a branch line operated from Ballyboley to Doagh via Ballynure and Ballyclare.

4.57   Whilst the railway track has been lifted, there remains a range of visible infrastructure. This disused transport route offers the potential for future transport or recreational opportunities.

Port of Larne

4.58   A key transportation asset in Mid & East Antrim is the Port of Larne - the second largest port in Northern Ireland. There are currently four daily return sailings between Larne and Cairnryan for freight, cars and foot passengers. The RDS indicates that Larne is a gateway i.e. a strategically important transport interchange which is important for economic development, freight distribution activities and additional employment generation.

4.59   The Islandmagee Ferry also operates out of the Port of Larne and provides a passenger only service to and from Islandmagee.

Airports

4.60   Whilst there are no airports located within Mid & East Antrim Borough Council, the area does benefit from ease of access to both Belfast International and Belfast City Airports.

Community Transport

4.61   Community Transport is a term covering a wide range of solutions usually developed to cover a specifically identified transport need, typically run by the local community for local neighbourhoods on a not-for-profit basis. Community transport provides the connectivity needed to get otherwise isolated or excluded groups of people to a range of destinations, and helps to develop sustainable communities. It is often provided through minibuses and volunteer car schemes.

4.62   The Rural Transport Fund (RTF) has been administered by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI - formerly DRD) since November 1998. Its primary objective is to support transport services designed to give people in rural areas improved access to work, education, healthcare, shopping and recreational activities and by so doing assists in reducing their social isolation. RTF provides a Rural Bus Subsidy annually to support socially necessary but uneconomic bus services in the rural area as well as providing revenue and capital funding for the Rural Community Transport Partnerships (RCTPs), managed by the Community Transport Association (CTA).

4.63   RCTP's are set up and managed by volunteers on a non-profit basis and may take different forms, reflecting their local nature. They encourage volunteers to use their own cars as part of social car schemes or to drive minibuses. 15 RTCPs have effectively become the primary source of accessible transport for many older people and people with disabilities living in rural areas.

4.64   As the Community Transport Association is supported by DfI, there is potential that the level of funding provided by the DfI may be reduced due to budget constraints. CTA generates additional finance to support its core services in Northern Ireland from its social enterprise activities and fund-raising to help make a difference for members.

4.65   Community Transport across Mid and East Antrim Borough is provided by both North Coast Community Transport and South Antrim Community Transport. North Coast Community Transport provides operational coverage across the Ballymena area, with South Antrim Community Transport covering the Carrickfergus and Larne areas (see Appendix P for Ballymena coverage map).

4.66   Both organisations provide the following services to members:
- Individual Travel via Dial-A-Lift: For individuals living in rural areas that are unable to, or have difficulty accessing local, basic services due to lack of conventional transport.
- Individual Travel Non RTF: Similar to Dial-A-Lift but is not funded. Its purpose is to assist individual members who need to make trips outside the operational areas and have no other ways to complete the trip.

- Group Travel: For member groups to travel to a range of community based activities.

4.67 The Community Transport Association also identified the following community transport providers within Mid and East Antrim:
- Carrickfergus College
- Ulidia Integrated College
- Larne Football Club Youth
- Education Authority North Eastern Region
- Green Pastures

Disability Transport

4.68 The Disability Action Transport Scheme (DATS) is a specialist local urban transport service operated by Disability Action for people with disabilities or for those who find it difficult using mainstream public transport. The service operates in conjunction with RCTPs throughout Northern Ireland.

4.69 DATS is available in 29 urban areas across Northern Ireland, enabling people to get about the operational area of the town for purposes including shopping, visiting and attending health appointments. Appendix Q illustrates DATS Operational Areas within Mid and East Antrim.

5 – Transportation Proposals

Mid & East
Antrim
Borough Council

5   Transportation Proposals

Road Proposals

5.1   In relation to future programmed works, the Department for Infrastructure has advised that there are no planned major road schemes within the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Area.   The upcoming revision of the Regional Strategic Transportation Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP) 2015 and the development of local transport plans in conjunction with Councils' Local Development Plans will provide the opportunity to refresh the Strategic Roads Improvements programme in line with the latest technical evidence, local development pressures and the Programme for Government priorities of economic growth and social equality.

Public Transport

5.2   The Translink Corporate Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18 and Business Plan 2015/16 highlights the level of public funding received by Translink for the provision of bus and rail services was cut by £13million 2014/15, equivalent to approximately 17%. A further reduction of £2.4 million is planned for 2015/16, bringing the overall reduction in funding to a total of £15.4m or 20%.

5.3   The following have also been identified within the Translink Corporate Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18 & Business Plan 2015/16:
   • Withdrawal of some rural services (the link from rural villages to large towns) with the reduction of stage carriage frequencies in all districts i.e. rural route only maintained where schools are serviced; and
   • Reduction in Saturday services across the network.
   https://www.translink.co.uk/Documents/Corporate/publications/Translink%20CorporateBusiness%20Plan%202020 15%20WEB.pdf

5.4   With these ongoing budget constraints, it is expected that efficiency measures will continue to prevail, with a potential reduction or withdrawal of services across Mid and East Antrim. Specifically, there may be a reduction in the frequency of services along the Larne train line, with Ballymena and Carrickfergus potentially experience a reduction in local town centre services.

5.5   The Future Rail Investment Strategy, incorporated within the Translink Corporate Plan includes the following projects and developments relating to track and facilities rehabilitation (stations, track, Park & Ride) across Mid and East Antrim for the plan period:
   • Progression of the Park and Ride programme;
   • Progression of Ballymena bus and rail station project;
   • Progression of level crossing safety works;
   • Enhancement of Northern line with dualling between Bleach Green and Ballymena.

5.6   The Network Utilisation Strategy prioritises investment needs arising from the Future Rail Investment Strategy. It has been developed to scope the potential fleet enhancement required to increase passenger capacity on the network.

5.7   The Railway Investment Prioritisation Strategy (DRD, 2014) is aimed at maintaining the current network, increasing passenger capacity and network capacity, introducing a high speed enterprise service and expanding the network.
https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/drd/railway-investment-priorisation-strategy_1.pdf

Car Parking

5.8   From 1st April 2015, off-street parking became the responsibility of Mid & East Antrim Borough Council whilst on-street parking has remains the responsibility of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). There are no known major/strategic proposals for parking within the council area.

Park and Ride

5.9   The Railway Investment Prioritisation Strategy also identified additional park and ride facilities at both Ballymena and Cullybackey train stations.

5.10   The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has since confirmed funding for the completion of a new 110 rail based Park and Ride facility in Cullybackey. This scheme was granted full planning permission on 2nd June 2015. The location of this site is illustrated below.

5.11   The Translink Strategy 'Get on Board' (May 2016) further highlights that Translink plan to expand their park and ride programme, including facilities at Cullybackey train station.

Location of approved Park and Ride facility at Cullybackey Train Station

Walking and Cycling

5.12   A number of primary and secondary walking routes within Mid & East Antrim are identified in the The Sub-Regional Transport Plan (SRTP) Technical Supplement's for the former Council areas of Ballymena and Larne (refer to Appendix R). The SRTP Technical Supplements also indicate proposed new cycle routes as follows:

- Along the route of the South West Distributor Road (as identified in the Ballymena Area Plan);
- From Suffolk Street to Parkway/Ballymoney Road;
- From Parkway/Ballymoney Road, through the Peoples Park, Sentry Hill and onto the Grove Road; and
- From Antiville Roundabout, along Antiville Road to Upper Cairncastle Road;

5.13   The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan also indicates cycle route proposals for Carrickfergus which are intended to enhance network connectivity and improve integration between walking and cycling. (also refer to Appendix S):

- Along the Shore Road;
- Along Ellis Street/Woodburn Road;
- Along Albert Road/North Road;
- From St Brides Street, through the Ampitheatre Wood and up Taylors Avenue; and
- Along Victoria Road.

Public Realm

5.14   The term 'Public Realm', refers to all external spaces which are publically accessible, including streets, squares, parks and car parks. The aim is to create high quality public spaces and footpaths to encourage better access and movement for all people including those with mobility or sensory issues.

5.15   Each of the three main towns within Mid and East Antrim have undergone, or are currently undergoing, public realm schemes which include the widening of footpaths, replacement of paved walkways, and the realignment of parking and loading bays to improve traffic flows and help promote a 'People First' approach to rebalance pedestrian and traffic requirements

6 – Key Findings

Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

6   Key Findings

6.1   In preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP) for Mid & East Antrim, it is important to assess the transport needs, problems and opportunities within the Council area and to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to transportation issues in the allocation of land for future development.

6.2   The LDP should aim to be innovative in its approach to the integration of transportation and land use, recognising the opportunities which any future improvements can provide for the economy and society as a whole.

6.3   The LDP and Transport Plans will have a complementary role to play in promoting greater integration of transportation and land use planning in line with regional policy. The location of new housing and economic development in order to maximise accessibility to services will be key to this.

6.4   The LDP has an important role to play in terms of harnessing the benefits of transport routes, particularly key transport routes, likely to facilitate future growth and investment in business and tourism.

6.5   The Plan needs to assist in promoting a modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport including Cycleways, Walkways, Public Transport, Park and Ride sites, and the development of Greenways.

6.6   The Plan needs to ensure that new housing developments are designed in a manner that can accommodate sustainable forms of transport and ensure permeability of movement for walking and cycling. Provision for linkage with green spaces and corridors within settlements and beyond will be important.

6.7   The Plan should include policy aimed to maintain or improve road safety for all car users.

6.8   The Plan should identify safe routes for schools so that prioritisation can be given to public highway improvements by the Department for Infrastructure (e.g. pelican crossings and footways) so that children can walk and cycle to school, and thereby reducing car usage at key times.

6.9   The LDP can use the Accessibility Analyses maps to help differentiate between potential development locations in the borough and to ensure that the most accessible locations are identified and considered at an early stage of plan development. Use of the maps can help to ensure that services are more accessible to all citizens of the borough by the application of integrated land-use and transport planning principles. In general terms, new residential development should be promoted in locations where public transport access to the urban centre is high or at least higher than neighbouring locations. Application of this principle may lead to increased use of public transport

and hence support the financial viability of public transport. A similar principle can be applied in terms of accessibility by active modes'.

6.10   The current climate of austerity is likely to impact on the delivery of road schemes. Cuts to funding also have significant implications for public transport, particularly community transport with a subsequent impact on the more economically disadvantaged and vulnerable in society. Furthermore, as the Department of Infrastructure will continue to make decisions and take responsibility for transportation services across Northern Ireland, the Council's role in relation to transportation will be limited. Co-operation with DfI and TransportNI will therefore be critical in terms of providing a sustainable transportation assessment of proposals within the Plan.

7 – Recommendations

Mid & East
Antrim
Borough Council

7   Recommendations

7.1   That members note the Paper.

7.2   That members agree to the publication of this Transportation Paper on the Council's website as an addition to the evidence base for the LDP.

7.3   That Members use the report to consider strategic issues that may need to be addressed through the LDP.

8 – Appendices

Mid & East
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