



**Input from  
Engineers Ireland  
Into the Department of Transport's  
Statement of Strategy 2008 – 2010**

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## **Executive Summary**

Engineers Ireland believes that it is now time to prioritise delivering real improvements to the transport system in Ireland to future proof the economy.

This can only be achieved through an integrated approach to project implementation.

The Dublin Transport Authority must be established without further delay with a remit to drive the integration of all *Transport 21* projects in the Dublin region.

With the population growing at the fastest rate in all of Europe and vehicle numbers on the increase, Ireland needs a transport system which ensures freedom of movement of goods and people. Congestion on our roads seriously impacts on the competitiveness of the nation.

Although significant progress has been made on the development of the national roads network, the potential of railways and the opportunity to integrate local suburban rail and high speed inter city connections must be exploited.

Any transport system has to be designed to suit the future needs of our growing population, combining technology and long term planning to ensure our country continues to prosper. The planning horizon needs to be extended and more projects need to be brought under the framework of this updated strategy.

## **Department of Transport Mandate and Mission (2005 – 2007)**

According to the Department of Transport's Statement of Strategy 2005 – 2007, the mandate given to the department in the Agreed Programme for Government is:

***“To implement an integrated transport policy designed as far as possible to overcome existing delays, bottlenecks and congestion and to provide alternative choice by alternative modes of transport.”***

The Mission Statement of the Department was:

***“To underpin Ireland's economic growth and competitiveness and contribute to social development through the efficient and effective delivery of an appropriately regulated, sustainable, safe and integrated transport system”***

## **The Role of Engineers**

Engineers Ireland is the representative voice of engineering in Ireland and our membership of 23,000 incorporates all disciplines of the profession across industry, public service, semi-state organisations and academic institutions.

A large majority of our membership will play a key role in the delivery of the projects identified in *Transport 21*. It is in this capacity that Engineers Ireland gives its inputs into the Department's Statement of Strategy 2008 – 2010.

## **Ireland's Position in the Global Economy**

The population of the Republic of Ireland now stands at over 4.2 million – its highest level for well over a century. The country also has the fastest growing population in Europe, rising at a rate of 2.5% per annum and it is estimated that our population is likely to increase to over five million by 2020 with anywhere between 70,000 to 100,000 immigrants arriving every year.

The number of vehicles in Ireland has increased by 104% in the last 16 years to 2.2 million vehicles with some 78% of those being privately owned. IBEC's latest biennial congestion survey in 2006 identified that 59% of businesses outside of Dublin faced rising delivery costs and disrupted staff schedules due to congestion.

The lack of an integrated transport infrastructure is having real day to day effects on Ireland's businesses and more worryingly threatening to impact on Ireland's overall competitiveness and our ambition to be a top five global economy.

## Time to Deliver

It is almost two years since the €34bn investment programme *Transport 21* was launched in Dublin Castle which detailed 39 infrastructure projects that would be completed by 2015. The plan was to provide an integrated solution to Ireland's current and evolving transport needs.

- Engineers Ireland is disappointed that delays were announced on 11 of these projects in August 2007.

*Transport 21* seeks to increase the use of public transport, particularly in urban areas and facilitate the better management of the use of the transport network so as to maximise its capacity to move people and goods.

- Rail projects providing incremental capacity increases must be given higher priority to reduce pressure on main travel/commuter routes, and provide a credible transport system to the large population now living on the outskirts of the major cities.

As part of *Transport 21*, the Dublin Transport Authority was to be established, with a mandate of driving the integration of the capital's transport infrastructure.

- The Dublin Transport Authority must be established without further delay.

Non-national roads account for up to 94% of the country's roads and carry around 60% of all road traffic. The 91,000 kilometres of non-national roads play an important economic role in Ireland. The network provides mobility within and between local economies and provides vital links to the strategic national road network, ports and airports which are our links with the wider European economy.

While Engineers Ireland welcomes the transfer of non-national roads from the remit of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the smooth transfer of the network to the Department of Transport and Marine is critical to the accomplishments as outlined in the National Development Plan 2007 – 2013 and the significant funding of €4.3 billion that has been earmarked for expenditure on the network.

- The decision to transfer the non-national roads network announced in June 2007 must be implemented without delay, based on a comprehensive transition plan.

Delays and lack of clarity as to who is ultimately responsible for driving transport infrastructure projects is only feeding the frustration that is already being felt by Ireland's large commuting workforce and transport operations. The time for procrastination has passed and this Government must ensure the timely delivery of all elements of the *Transport 21* plan.

## **An Integrated Approach**

As an island economy, Ireland depends heavily on the capacity and quality of its aviation links to support continued economic growth. The perceived quality of Ireland's air transportation infrastructure was the third lowest of the 16 countries surveyed by IMD and published in their World Competitiveness yearbook in 2005. Dublin airport alone served more than 21 million passengers in 2006 and traffic is expected to increase to 23 million in 2007 and to 30 million per annum by 2015. Car parking and the infrastructure needs of a growing workforce in the vicinity of the airport must be integrated into this plan.

An integrated and co-ordinated approach to planning and traffic management needs to be implemented on both the air and ground-side of Dublin airport. This is essential to ensure the airport become an efficient gateway for air travel into and out of Ireland. The Metro North project will be a key part of this solution but it must not be planned in isolation.

Engineers Ireland welcomes the approval of a new parallel runway at Dublin Airport in August of this year, and the granting of planning permission for the second terminal to the DAA. While this goes some way to facilitating the increasing passenger traffic, there is still some way to go and the risk of a legal challenge to its construction remains.

This same integrated and collaborative planning process needs to be applied to the running and continued development of regional airports to maximise the contribution which can be made by these facilities to balanced regional development.

Irish ports are significant gateways for freight and passenger traffic and their development potential needs to be exploited in a way which best contributes to national competitiveness. Each port also presents major challenges in traffic management. Access to the ports is a particular concern and any future developments must include plans to develop the surrounding infrastructure.

Engineers Ireland questions the current pricing structure for the Dublin Port Tunnel which it believes could go some way to alleviating commuter traffic heading to and from Dublin city centre. However, the current prices are a deterrent to car users at peak times.

Dublin Port is facing a capacity deficit within two years in lift-on-lift-off containers and bulk liquid handling. The Dublin Port Authority has proposed reclaiming and developing a 21 hectare site and a discussion document outlining an alternative of moving the port to Bremore has been floated by the Progressive Democrats. A strategic decision regarding the future of Dublin Port must be made without delay taking into account the goods transport needs of the whole eastern region and the development of higher density living quarters in the city.

An integrated approach to the development of our port infrastructure throughout the country is vital.

## **Previous Engineers Ireland Publications and Submissions**

### *Urban Forum – A Better Quality of Life For All – 13<sup>th</sup> February 2007*

Earlier this year, the report of the Urban Forum published by Engineers Ireland in conjunction with the four other bodies representing the professionals in the Irish construction industry – the Irish Landscape Institute, the Irish Planning Institute, the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland and the Society of Chartered Surveyors – called for a more sustainable built environment. Included in this study was an examination of the serious consequences of the imbalance in transport development.

Ireland is becoming more oil-dependent at a time when fuel prices are at all-time high levels. Under *Transport 21*, the Government is proposing to spend significantly more on our road infrastructure than on rail. While the road infrastructure was clearly in need of major investment, a greater emphasis is now needed on efficient ‘high speed’ railways connected with local suburban rail. Also, light rail services are essential to achieve the urban development patterns that are envisaged in national and regional planning strategies. In addition, priority needs to be given to buses on quality bus corridors in urban areas (QBCs) which are also more efficient than cars where road space is restricted.

### *Establishment of a Dublin Transport Authority – February 2006*

Engineers Ireland welcomed the establishment of the Dublin Transport Authority (DTA) in its submission to Government last year and committed itself to supporting the DTA in achieving a shared vision for the region.

In this submission, Engineers Ireland asked that the Department of Transport consider the points below in relation to the establishment and operation of the DTA.

- The independence and accountability of the DTA must be enshrined in legislation;
- The DTA must have the power to set transport policy for the region and the ability to control its implementation;
- If the DTA is to be effective, it must have access to funding and technical and commercial expertise;
- The powers of the DTA must include the control of land-use planning;
- The DTA must ensure that sustainability principles are considered in the evaluation, communication, delivery and operation of all transport projects under its remit.

## Conclusion

What is clear is that Ireland's future transport system must be designed around the real movements of people in, out and around our cities and towns and across the country. The focus must be on the overall end-to-end customer experience, ensuring compatibility between all modes of transport to minimise door-to-door journey times (location, ticketing, technology, timetabling, provision of park-and-ride).

Issues such as health and safety, sustainability, environmental impact, social inclusion and the role of pedestrians must be considered up front. Plus technology, in areas like integrated ticketing and real-time information systems for passengers, must be speedily delivered.

With the capacity of the construction industry at an all-time high, and a well-signalled slowdown in the housing construction market, the timing is good to start bringing some of the major transport projects to construction stage more quickly.

Infrastructure projects are for the long term and our decisions will impact several generations to come. We have a history of building things too late and too small. Let us learn from the M50 experience and give ourselves the capacity to grow rather than constraining the potential of our economy by making short term savings on long term projects.

The message is simple: we need to think bigger and act much faster to take the pain out of commuting for our growing number of citizens to make Ireland a better and more attractive place in which to live and work as well as ensuring the timely delivery of goods and services to future proof our competitiveness in the global economy.

## Priorities for Strategy 2008 – 2010

Engineers Ireland believes that the greatest need at this time is for a clear and determined focus on delivery to achieve the significant improvements in lifestyle and productivity set-out in the previous strategy. A second priority is to ensure an integrated approach to all projects within the strategy framework.

In parallel to this, it will be necessary to carry out further studies to assign priorities to additional needs which have been identified since the launch of *Transport 21*. These include:

- Extending the horizon of *Transport 21* to 2050
- Preparing a new NDP transport funding envelope beyond 2020
- More transparent *Transport 21* project reporting
- Eastern bypass for Dublin
- Second tunnel for Cork
- Review of operation of DTA in 2009 following its establishment in 2007
- Traffic management plans to cope with disruption during major projects.