Part B

Letterkenny Local Transport Plan 2023-2029

Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council

Contents

PART B – LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Chapter 15 – Transport Policy Framework

Introduction

Part A of this Plan - 'The Letterkenny Plan' - sets out the strategic land use framework for the town over a 6-year minimum lifetime. This 'Local Transport Plan' for Letterkenny constitutes 'Part B' and must be read in tandem, and as part of, 'Part A The Letterkenny Plan'.

This document has been developed at a strategic level in accordance with national and regional policy, the key elements of which are set out below.

15.1 National Policy Context

National Planning Framework (NPF) and National Development Plan (NDP)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out ten high level strategic goals that outline the priorities across key sectors and themes by way of National Strategic Outcomes' (NSO's). The NPF recognises the importance of integrating land use and transport planning to achieve compact growth and sustainable mobility, and accordingly sets out NSOs with a transport focus:

- ❖ **Compact growth** – 'Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work'.
- ❖ **Enhanced Regional Accessibility – '**To enhance accessibility between key urban centres of population and their regions'.
- ❖ **Sustainable Mobility –** '…that by 2040 our cities and towns will enjoy a cleaner, quieter environment free of combustion engine driven transport systems.'
- ❖ **Transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society** – '…the national objective of achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.'

The NPF also identifies the following investment priorities:

- ❖ **The National Road Network**
- ❖ **Environmentally Sustainable Public transport**
- ❖ **Climate Action.**

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal - The National Development Plan accompanying the NPF provides specific support for TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (Chapter 7, 'Enhanced Regional Accessibility, National Roads/New Infrastructure p.64 refers, wherein is listed the N56/N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham, and the N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 routes that impact on Letterkenny).

This Local Transport Plan aligns with these strategic objectives whilst recognising that the achievement of the NSOs at a local level within Letterkenny is wholly dependent on all stakeholders and plan users

'driving' this hugely important sustainable mobility agenda to deliver on the objectives and recommendations in the Plan.

Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP 23)

This Plan sets out a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government in 2021. Transport accounts for approximately 20% of Ireland's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with road transport responsible for 96% of those GHG emissions and also directly responsible for a range of air pollutants that negatively impact both human health and the environment. The levels of noise, accidents, and congestion associated with road transport reduces quality of life, deters active travel, and costs society hundreds of millions of euro per annum in wasted time. Promoting cleaner, safer and more sustainable mobility is critical for climate policy, and it also represents an opportunity to improve our health, boost the quality of our lives, meet the needs of our growing urban centres, and connect our rural, urban and suburban communities.
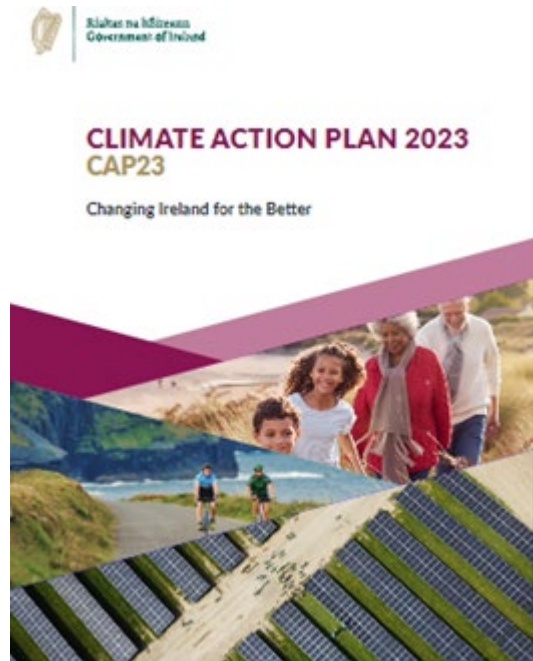
In view of the emissions and the energy use for transport, the Plan establishes a clear approach and rationale for the need to achieve a significant change in how Irish society travel and create a shift to more sustainable alternatives.

The Climate Action Plan emphasises sustainable, and particularly active, travel but also notes that providing for the sustainable movement of goods, services and people will necessarily include some travel by road and thus the development of future necessary roads infrastructure projects. The Plan calls for a significant cut in transport emissions by 2030 through measures including:

• 500,000 extra walking, cycling and public transport journeys per day by 2030
• Increasing the proportion of kilometres driven by passenger electric cars to between 40 and 45% by 2030, in addition to a reduction of 10% in kilometres driven by the remaining internal combustion engine cars
• All replacements for bus and commuter rail vehicles and carriages to be low or zero carbon by 2030
• Increased rollout of rural public transport through Connecting Ireland. [42-50% reduction in emissions by 2030].

Ways in which to achieve these transport focused targets are comprehensively detailed in the plan and summarised below:
- Sustainable Mobility
- System efficiency and demand management
- Fleet Electrification
- Renewable and Alternative Transport Fuels.
- Horizon actions and emerging technologies.

National Sustainable Mobility Policy

The National Sustainable Mobility Policy sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. Accompanied by an action plan to 2025 it sets out actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing safe, green, accessible and efficient alternatives to car journeys. It also includes demand management and behavioural change measures to manage daily travel demand more efficiently and to reduce the journeys taken by private car.

The policy aims to deliver at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys by 2030 and a 10% reduction in the number of kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars. It will make it easier for people to choose walking, cycling and use public transport daily instead of having to use a petrol or diesel car.

National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI), Department of Transport

The National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) is the Department of Transport's strategic framework for future investment and decision making in transport and seeks to enable the National Planning Framework, support the Climate Action Plan, and promote positive social, environmental, and economic outcomes throughout Ireland. NIFTI sets out the road user modal hierarchy in Ireland as;

1. Active Travel (Walking & Cycling);
2. Public Transport;
3. Private Vehicles.

NIFTI also outlines an intervention hierarchy which is:

1. Maintain;
2. Optimise;
3. Improve;
4. New, all set out as per the adjacent figures [1].

The NTA's ATOS tool and the Council's GIS systems have been central to the identification of modal networks and where and how improvements are necessary to create a connected and functioning network within the town in accordance with 'New' and' improved' stages in the NIFTI hierarchy of interventions as per below.

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[1] National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI), Department Of Transport.

15.2 National Guidance

Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA).

This National guidance prepared by both the NTA and TII sets out a step-by-step approach (see Fig. 15.1 below) to the assessment and development of local transport policy and interventions. It is intended to ensure that the assessment of transport demand and its associated impact plays a central role in informing the future development proposals of an area, and how local authorities can ensure that transport planning is integrated into the development planning process at a local level.
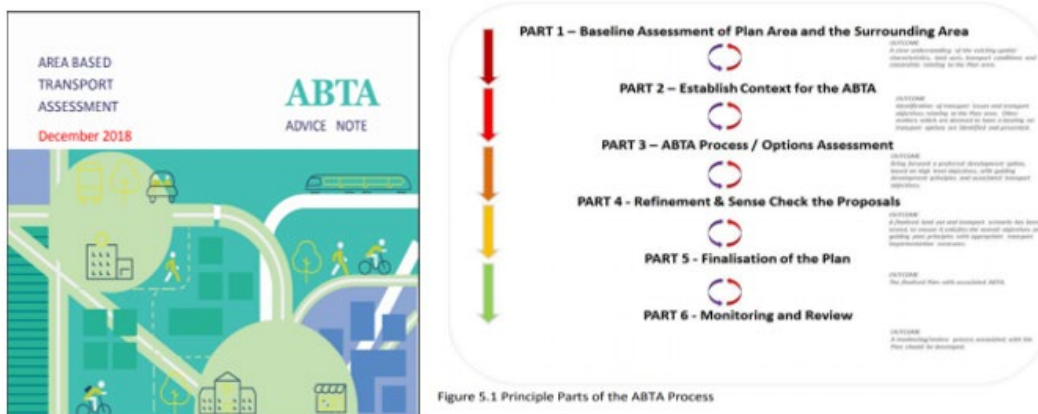
Figure 15.1 - National Transport Authority ABTA Guidance

The following summary sets out the stages of the ABTA guidance process and its application as part of this Transport Plan and Local Area Plan making process. The Council acknowledges the assistance of the NTA during the process. The steps undertaken are in accordance with the ABTA Guidance. It is important to note however that the 'ABTA' guidance note was designed as a blueprint for the preparation of these strategic plans with metropolitan areas in mind and thus its application to the Letterkenny scenario has been tailored to the scale of this settlement.

PART 1 – Baseline Assessment of Plan Area and the Surrounding Area:

• Preparation of a detailed and comprehensive Letterkenny 'Position Paper' – sets out detailed issues within the identified study area:
    1. Socio – Economic;
    2. Strategic/Geographical;
    3. Physical Infrastructural;
    4. Lack of alternatives /low demand for the town bus service /lack of sustainable or multi-modal options as alternative choices.

• Combining the Local Area Plan and Local Transport Plan processes: LTP & LAP - Working alongside preparation of the Draft Local Area Plan. Complementarity on Regional growth ambitions, and population increase projections. Future land use zonings and network development across all modes compliment each other.
• CSO Powscar data provided by NTA this level of detail enabled GIS info extracted pertaining to the study area to identify origins and destinations, key residential areas of the town, significant employment areas, Schools and town core retail.

• Utilisation of ATOS software (Access to Opportunities and Services (ATOS)) for the identification of connectivity and permeability improvements and new interventions to the existing walking network within the town.

PART 2 – Establish Context for the ABTA:

- Further to work on position paper at 1 above – Internal working DCC group established with Area Roads and Road Design team.

- Engagement with An Taisce and Green Schools programme.

- Ongoing Engagement with the National Transport Authority.

- Engagement with Local elected members

• Local Letterkenny context	1. Regional parity; 2. North-west City region; 3. LK Strategic growth ambitions – regional growth centre; 4. Atlantic Technological University; 5. LK 2040 Regeneration strategy; 6. NTA Active Travel funding.

PART 3 – ABTA Process / Options Assessment:

- Internal working group – identified areas in need for improvement and new intervention on the basis of the work completed at earlier stages in the process i.e. where origins and destinations, schools, significant employers (Town centre, ATU & LUH) . Deployment of Atos tool information.

- Provision of interventions across all networks walking, cycle and public transport. Local permeability, improvement schemes and new interventions to ensure a connected network across the town linking origins and destinations.

- Proposals made alongside 2040 Regeneration Strategy project outputs for walking and cycle infrastructure (Active travel), reallocation of road space, creation of town centre boulevards, multi modal transport hub, public transport corridor.

- Atkins consultants engaged to assess proposed interventions and assessment through an initial assessment process by way of the Multi criteria assessment framework (MCAF).

- Engagement and discussion with NTA – in how to enhance the existing town bus service. Possible future routes were identified by NTA having due regard to location of schools, origins and destinations. Routes to be identified in local transport plan to identify future ambitions for the enhancement of the Towns public transport provision.

Stage 1 (Macro) – ESTABLISH A 'BIG PICTURE' UNDERSTAND OF THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOME:

Analysis compiled of a number of identified areas (description given to each area) of the town. Providing a current assessment and a future anticipated assessment of how that particular area would perform with new interventions for walking and cycling.
Continuous ongoing consultation with working group.

Stage 2 (Micro) - IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP SPECIFIC MEASURE BASED ON THE 'BIG PICTURE' OUTCOME

- Significant work complied on identification of enhanced public transport service through identification of potential additional routes. Work dependant on further continued engagement with NTA.

• Active travel routes progressing through 'The Pathfinder programme'. Number of Letterkenny Active travel projects currently at Phase 2 (Concept Development and Option Selection), which includes the identification of potential improvement options. • Consultation with NTA detailed the Active travel projects overlaid with future possible NTA Bus corridors/routes to enable further identification of any related issues that may affect any potential bus route.
Part 4 - Refinement & Sense Check the Proposals.
• Consultation with NTA regarding inline service / depots / routes and route review / future routes and options for consideration / bus stop signs and shelters / funding mechanisms / part 8 planning and incorporating bus route infrastructure into same (or generically if necessary) / review of town centre route and how one ways would work with bus stops on 2 way sections if possible. • DCC to further review possible bus stop locations based on NTA advise and further development of the one-way system. NTA still to progress route design and on site engagement for resilience check and amendments as required.
Part 5 - Finalisation of the Plan
• Development and finalisation of a Land use transportation plan. • Proposed transport interventions and enhancements across all networks: walking, cycling, public transport consistent with the future development of the town and the land use zoning ambitions of the town. • Inclusion of active travel phasing timeline.
Part 6 - Monitoring and Review
• Post adoption monitoring and review practices will be initiated and established. • Monitoring of delivery timeline of Active travel projects. • Continued collaboration with NTA to ensure efficient and effective delivery of public transport network enhancements as proposed. • Further monitoring of how all network improvements interact with one another.

15.3 Regional Policy Context:

Northern and Western Regional Assembly's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)2020-2032

The RSES sets out the following key regional policy objectives specific to the delivery of key transport related projects in Letterkenny:

RPO 3.7.30: To deliver the TEN-T priority route improvement Donegal and Letterkenny by 2028, including the N-56 Link, and also progress the Southern Relief Road (now known as the Southern Network Project).

RPO 3.7.31: To facilitate the expansion of the LYIT Campus (now known as the ATU).

RPO 3.7.32: To prepare (within 2 years of the adoption of the RSES), a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Letterkenny, which will include a multi-modal focus, and Public Transport roadmap.

RPO 3.7.33: To develop a dedicated and integrated cycle network around Letterkenny, including the creation of a Greenway along the line of the River Swilly and oriented around the Central Linear Park Project to offer residents a viable alternative to car-based journeys.

RPO 3.7.34: To deliver a multi-purpose Public and Private Regional Transport Hub within the Town Core of Letterkenny to serve County Donegal and the wider region.

RPO 3.7.35: To carry out a feasibility study which investigates the potential and viability of a Rail Link between Letterkenny and Derry in future decades.

This LTP has been prepared in accordance with RPO 3.7.32 above and RPO 6.27 which sets out the Assembly's support for the collaborative preparation of Local Transport Plans led by local authorities in conjunction with the NTA and other stakeholders based on the Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) guidance. The RSES also stipulates that LTPs will be based on a clear set of objectives and will include the transport priorities for each settlement in terms of public transport infrastructure and services; cycle investment; improvements to the pedestrian environment; and road enhancements.

15.4 Local Context

Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy

'Letterkenny 2040' is a process to realize a Regeneration Strategy for Letterkenny Town Centre, which builds on an ambition and vision for the town to realize its full potential as a magnet that draws and keeps people here.'[2]

The Strategy is a multi-faceted project to deliver place-based change for the urban core of Letterkenny and thereby to provide positive impacts on Letterkenny's wider regional and cross-border catchment. The Regeneration Strategy includes a strong transportation focus and the preparation of the Local Area Plan and Local Transport Plan and Regeneration Strategy have been developed in tandem. The Masterplan process, as part of the strategy, is focused on reimagining the town centre and at the core of this is: the enhancement of 'Multi-Modes' including Active Travel connectivity; development of town centre public realm; creation of green infrastructure including the 'LK Green Connect'; public urban wetlands as blue infrastructure; identification and acquisition of a site for a future multi-modal regional transport hub including a dedicated public transport corridor serving the hub. (refer to Chapters 4 and 9 in the Letterkenny Plan setting out the background to, and key objectives of, the 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy')

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[2] Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy, 2022.

Local Traffic Modelling

Consultants were appointed in 2019 to undertake traffic modelling for the Plan. The 2009 ILUTS model was used as a base starting point, and 2017 Present Year Validations of the ILUTS model were progressed including:

- Reviewing developments in Letterkenny between 2009 and 2017;
- Application of traffic growth in Letterkenny between 2009 and 2017;
- Changes and upgrades to the network between 2009 and 2017 (and subsequently the new Kiltoy junction arrangements); and
- Completing a calibration and validation exercise to the Project Appraisal guidance acceptability criteria.

Using this updated base model, three forecast year demand scenarios were developed to reflect a phased implementation of the draft Land Use Plan. The following interventions were then tested in the forecast models:

- TEN-T
- Southern Network Project; and
- 10% reduction in demand proxy test to represent a shift to sustainable modes.

A review was also undertaken of the 2019 and 2022 TII traffic counters situated on three main corridors into Letterkenny. This analysis indicated that 2022 traffic volumes and temporal profiles had broadly returned to a pre Covid-19 level.

Chapter 16 - Key Issues & Underlying Factors.

In order to prepare an effective transportation strategy, it is critical to develop a comprehensive understanding of what the key issues/problems are and what are the underlying factors contributing to the manifestation of those issues.

16.1 Existing Traffic, Transport and Movement Conditions within the Plan Area:

- **Socio Economic:** Letterkenny is the primary urban centre within the county and part of an important cross border network within the North-West Metropolitan region (Letterkenny/Derry/Strabane). The town acts as the main attractor for the county across many sectors and services and for this reason there are a number of key general underlying strategic factors that contribute to the transportation issues impacting on Letterkenny today. The critical mass of population in Letterkenny acts as the driver for the multiple service function the town offers. The town is host to Letterkenny University Hospital, significant employment opportunities provided by, inter alia, large medical technology companies, and third level education opportunities provided by LYIT. Retail offering in the town is also extensive.

- **Strategic/Geographical:** From a spatial perspective, Letterkenny's central geographical location within the county leads to the town being used as a destination intersection for access to key cross county and onward arterial routes in most directions. With only one bridge crossing the river Swilly at the southern gateway to the town, east and west onward bound traffic has to transit through the town before further onward county destinations are reached. Strategically there is a need to ensure that the potential and viability of Letterkenny becoming a key node for rail travel is maintained as part of a multi-modal approach to transportation and travel within and from the North West.

- **Physical/infrastructural:** There are severe inadequacies in key strategic road arteries and junctions, such that they are unable to accommodate the large volumes of strategic and non-strategic traffic using the network at peak daily commuting times, bank holidays and other special events. Many of the major junctions are unable to accommodate the demand resulting in peak-time congestion and journey time unreliability for motorized transport.

- **Spatial characteristics of the town:** The spatial pattern of land use development over the past 20 years has resulted in significant sprawl of suburban housing and road infrastructure to the extreme edges of the town primarily to the north, north-west and north-east of the town. This has unsurprisingly resulted in a demand for infrastructure and services in these locations further exacerbated by the elevated nature of the land placing these residential locations at a remove from the town centre core and as an undesirable location for active travel mobility.

- **Lack of sustainable alternatives:** The town can be described as a motorized vehicle-dominated town, primarily served by roads-based solutions and infrastructure, with priority given to motorised transport on the town's main road corridors. The distinct lack of quality walking and cycling networks means there is an over reliance on private cars. The reliance on the private car for households in the large suburban areas in the town is due to a combination of: distances to the town centre often exacerbated by the town's topography; the absence of effective public transport services including connections to a national rail network; the absence of quality walking and cycling networks and the difficulties likely to be

encountered in providing such dedicated infrastructure due to limitations in carriageway widths along most of extents of these corridors and the unreasonable gradients that exists across the majority of the town.

- **Public Transport:** Currently the town is served by one town bus service provided by a private operator offering one bus daily across 2 routes with intermittent frequency. This service, due to its non-peak time offering, may not accommodate or facilitate commuters or students and, as such, a wider choice is necessary to ensure that the regional centre offers suitably designed public transport options to service and adequately meet the needs of all residents, visitors, students and commuters.

The town bus station is located on the eastern fringe of the town centre located within the curtilage of the Letterkenny Shopping Centre and associated car-park and is the Bus Eireann hub for county and intercounty public bus and coach transport. This station does not at present possess the facilities for multi modal transport options. Multiple existing private bus operators currently offer their county and inter-county services at various on-street locations throughout the town. The provision of such a transportation hub located within the town centre is essential for the development of the connectivity and accessibility of the town going forward.

- **Car-parking provision:** The town currently provides plentiful, low cost/free and convenient car-parking, particularly within and on fringes of the town centre. To date park and ride infrastructure has not been introduced to the town due to the abundance of town centre car-parking acting as a magnet to visiting traffic. The Council aim to carry out an appraisal and assessment of town centre car-parking provision and identify a strategy for the future. It is an objective to prepare this strategy in the medium term. The results will then be used to determine the best way to address car-parking provision, reallocation and how best to encourage sustainable modes.

Chapter 17 - Pre-Draft Public Consultation

'Northern and Western Regional Assembly area's use of sustainable modes of transport was 21.3%, which is almost 8% less than the state average in 2016', (*Northern and Western Regional Assembly's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), 2020.)***

17.1   Collective Public Consultation Findings:

Over the course of the last 3 years a number of indivual public consultation exercises have been carried out in Letterkenny. Whilst initiated for seperate specific purposes described below, the findings of all are extremely relevant in assisting and informing the prepartion of this Plan insofar as identifying the issues of concern to the public and residents of the town. The commonality of issues are summarised at the end of this Chapter.

17.1.1: Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan

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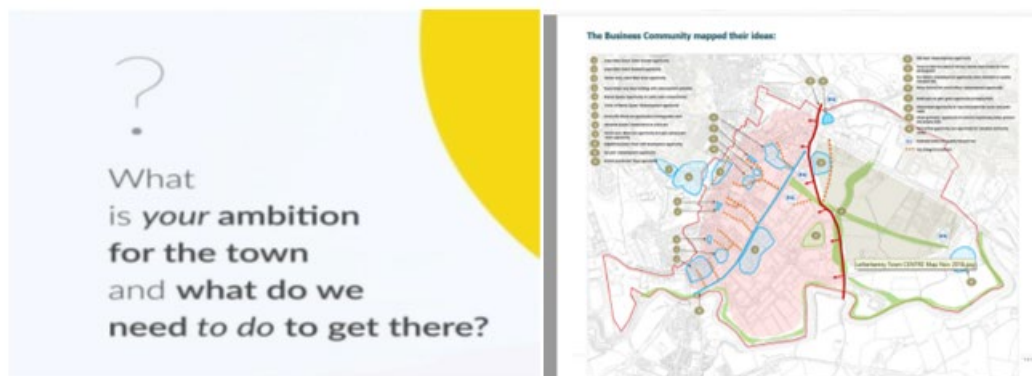
Figure 17.1 - June 2018 - Statutory Pre-Draft Public Consultation on the Letterkenny Plan

A number of public consultation events were held through sector led workshops and online surveys, and inviting written submissions. The results were compiled and grouped into nine key themes. As can be seen '**Active travel', 'Sustainable movement' and 'Transport'** feature in 4 of the 9 key pillars in Fig 17.2 below:
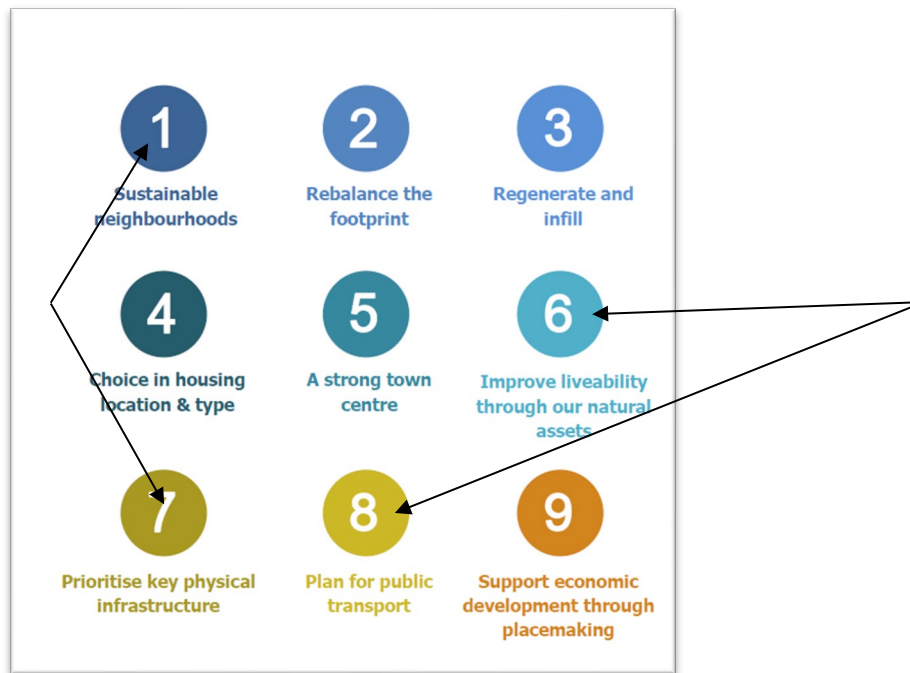
Figure 17.2 - Key Pillars

This is further evidenced in the results of the town-centre focused online survey carried out as part of this same process in May 2018 wherein, although more than half of the respondents stated that during a typical visit to the town centre, they are 'very likely' to visit more than one part of it, 76% of these people indicated that their predominant mode of transport within the town centre is car. Walking was identified as the second highest mode (22%) followed by taxi (1%), bus (0.5%) and bicycle (0.5%). 52% of respondents considered that accessibility improvements are those most required in the town centre including citing public transport, walking, cycling, greenways, pedestrianisation, traffic management and road linkages.

Pre-draft consultation was conducted during the early baseline research stage of this LTP preparation process. The consultation exercise was carried out online using the Survey-monkey platform over a 3-week period concluding on Friday 16th October, 2020. The survey prompted great interest with 533 fully completed responses returned (see Appendix E).

The following information represents the salient points derived from the consultation responses:

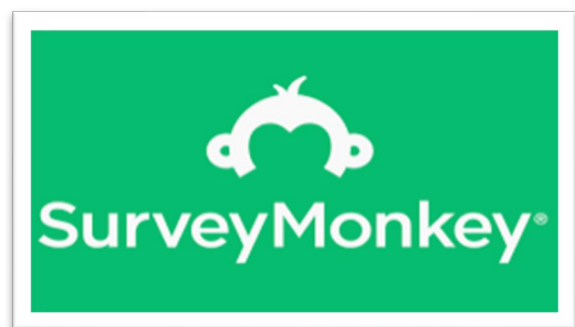- Respondents have a preference for the use of motorized transport for the majority of trips to the town across numerous journey purposes and destinations.
- Sustainable mobility modes are amongst the three lowest forms of transport.
- Questions sought information on what part of the town respondents originate from, the respondents' destinations, and the mode of transport.

    For example, of 46% of respondents where work was the destination:

- 86% used the car to reach their destination; and
- 36% of these were commuters travelling from outside of Letterkenny.

Mode of Transport	Purpose of Journey
■ Car ■ On foot ■ Taxi ■ Bus/Coach ■ Bicycle	■ Work ■ Shopping ■ School Colege
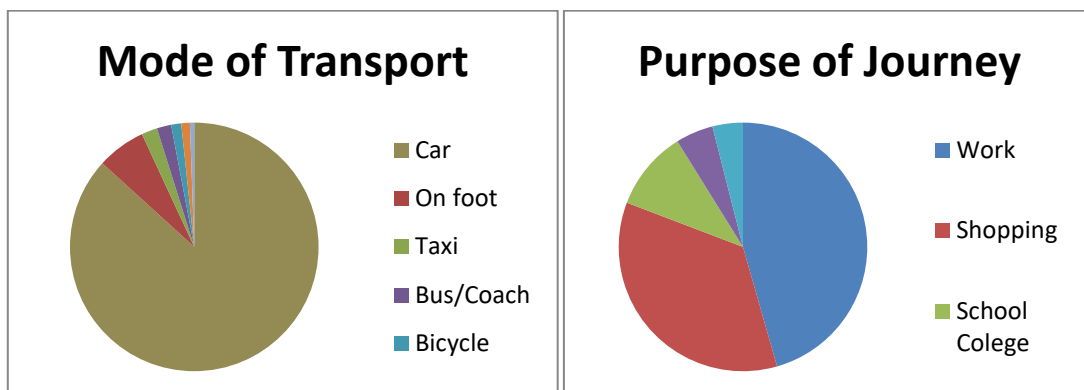
- The main points to be taken from the survey are as follows:

  - o Car is the dominant mode of transportation to and within the town.
  - o Work destinations is the main trip generator.
  - o Majority of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists find the town 'not so user friendly'.
  - o Increase in Active travel only if dedicated infrastructure is to be put in place.
  - o Development of a regional transport Hub is 'Extremely important'.
  - o Strategic road schemes and key infrastructure rate the highest as being' Extremely important'.

17.1.2: Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy
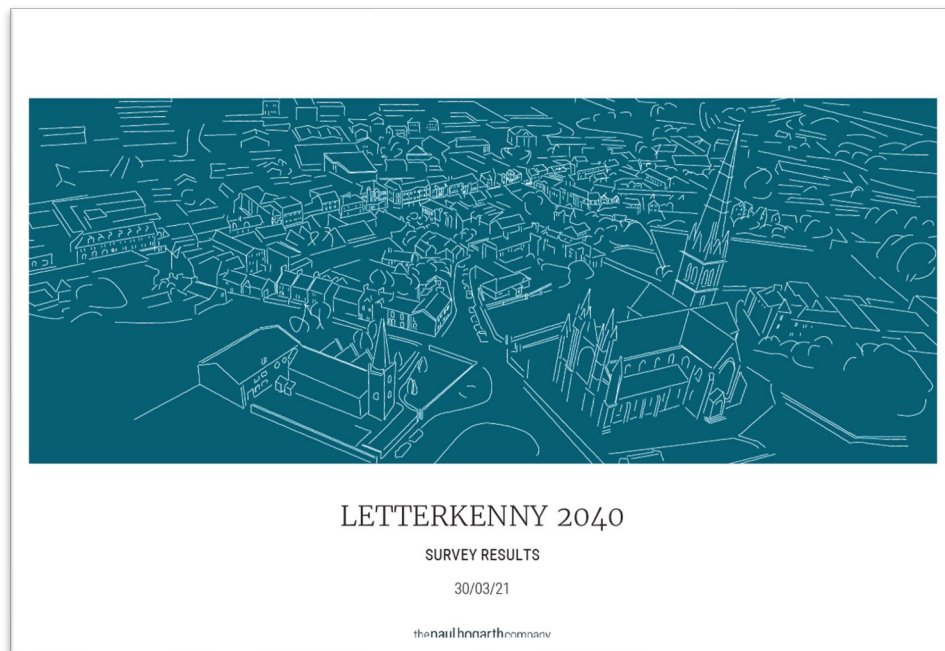
An online public consultation survey was initiated as part of the 1st stage 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy' during March, 2021. A total of 810 submissions were received following the survey and public engagement conducted across a number of thematic workshops. The questions asked sought to gather a wide-ranging and extensive level of detail on the high-level issues affecting the town and concerning the public. Subsequent questions then further drilled down to the main local issues that the public felt were important areas for consideration and addressing as part of the Regeneration strategy for the town centre.

The results of this process highlighted key areas of concern from the public with a particular transport focus. When asked to name 3 dislikes of the town the compilation of results showed that 2 of the top 3 dislikes were transport-related, namely:

- o   Traffic and congestion; and
- o   A disconnected Town Centre that discourages pedestrian and cyclist journeys.

When asked to identify the top priorities for the future of the town, the results showed that the public ranked among the top 7 categories:

- o   Pedestrian and Active travel,
- o   Improvements in road infrastructure; and
- o   Better public transport

17.2 Public Consultation Conclusions:

The collective findings across all three public consultation exercises display common transportation themes that may be summarised as follows:

> o **An identified need for dedicated sustainable and active travel walking and cycling infrastructure connecting a permeable town centre;**
> o **Key priority strategic infrastructure projects to address access into town and congestion at peak times**
> o **The development of a regionally important multi modal transport hub is vital for the town.**
> o **Improvements in frequency, service and offering of public transport with particular regard to a Town Bus service.**

Chapter 18 - Challenges and Priorities

18.1 SWOT Analysis

A high-level SWOT analysis of the preceding analyses chapters may be summarized as follows:

Fig 18.1 SWOT Analysis:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1. Large population base with future population projected to grow. 2. Planned strategic roads project(s). 3. Key service provider across numerous functions: Employment base, Health, Education and Retail. 4. Attractive traditional Main Street including Cathedral Quarter and existing diversity of retail offering.	1. Vehicle dominated town, primarily served by roads-based solutions and infrastructure. 2. Town centre traffic regime not supportive of walking, cycling infrastructure. 3. Inadequate town public transport service. 4. Lack of active travel options in the town centre and wider area. 5. Residential development located in elevated and dispersed areas.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
1. Effective combining of land use and etransport planning for access and mobility. 2. LK 2040 Regeneration Strategy for town centre. 3. Development of a town centre Regional Transport Hub as a single multi-purpose transport point. 4. Creation of opportunities for improved permeability and connectivity to encourage sustainable mobility.	1. Lack of future funding options. 2. Strategic roads projects creating greater appeal for motorized travel. 3. Topography throughout the town remains an obstacle to greater take up of walking and cycling.

Table 18.1 - Summary of Key Issues / Challenges:

1.	**Dominance of car dependant development(s).**
2.	**Road traffic congestion throughout the town particularly at peak times.**
3.	**The lack of alternative sustainable transportation options.**
4.	**Land use patterns that encourage car usage.**
5.	**Lack of permeability throughout the town.**
6.	**Closed cell neighbourhoods with no potential for permeability.**

Table 18.2 - Summary of Key Priorities

1.	**Investment in improved networks and new interventions for the delivery of Active travel infrastructure by way of the development of the various pillars of Active travel schemes as set out in Chapter 19 and illustrated on Map 19.2 below.**
2.	**Continued collaboration with the NTA in developing a route network development plan for public transport provision within the town.**
3.	**Continued support for the development of future strategic road realignment and development schemes on the fringes of the town.**
4.	**Continued support for the development of the 'Letterkenny 2040' Regeneration Strategy with particular regard to the identification and development of the Regional transport hub, Letterkenny Green Connect and proposed Town Centre linkages and interventions as presented in the Linkages and Public Space Action Plan. P providing for seamless connectivity with all other identified active travel schemes in Table 19.1. (Chapter 19).**

18.2 Conclusions

National and regional planning policy strongly advocates compact growth to facilitate and promote live-able compact towns where most destinations and services can be readily accessed, preferably by way of sustainable and or active travel infrastructure. Walking and cycling are completely sustainable options and a low-cost effective mode of public transport. It is widely acknowledged that active travel can create long term meaningful benefits for the sustained future vibrancy of local neighbourhoods, social health and wellbeing of the local population, and climate and environmental quality. The creation of options can lead to reduced car dependency, reduced transport costs and given the blended home working lifestyle thereby less time spent travelling.

To align with national policy, inclusive of the NIFTI hierarchies, this Plan addresses networks for all modes**:** walking, cycling, public transport and, for private vehicles, the long-required strategic road improvements, which projects shall incorporate multi modal infrastructure.

This Local Transport Plan incorporates ambitions to address the above-noted issues and priorities:

Figure 18.2 - Ambitions of the LAP & LTP

LETTERKENNY PLAN AND LOCAL
TRANSPORT PLAN 2022-2031 AMBITIONS

TOWN CENTRE — REGENERATION AND RE-IMAGINING OF TOWN CENTRE (LETTERKENNY 2040)

REMOVAL OF STRATEGIC TRAFFIC — (TEN-T, SNP, NRR, WRR)

POPULATION & HOUSING — 4,500 MORE HOMES — 15,000 MORE PEOPLE

JOBS — 6,000 MORE JOBS

ACTIVE TRAVEL & PUBLIC TRANSPORT — TOWN CENTRE REGIONAL TRANSPORT HUB PLUS 2 ADDITIONAL PUBLIC BUS ROUTES, 21 ACTIVE TRAVEL WALKING AND CYCLING SCHEMES, CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

WATER SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE — CAPITALISE ON REGIONAL CENTRE AND NWCR STATUS

EDUCATION — UNIVERSITY STATUS & 1,000 ADDITIONAL STUDENTS

The resulting strategy is set out under five specific networks:

1. **Walking/Pedestrian - Section 19.3**
2. **Cycle Strategy – Section 19.4**
3. **Public Transport Strategy – Chapter 20**
4. **Town Centre Transport Strategy – Chapter 21**
5. **Strategic Roads Strategy – Chapter 22**

Chapter 19 - Walking & Cycling Mode Networks

19.1 Context

Several projects that are either specifically for active travel purposes, or that incorporate active travel facilities as part of a wider project, are already being progressed in Letterkenny, or in the town and its environs. These include:

- LK Green Connect public realm project: Phase 1 opened June 2023; Phase 2 progressing to statutory and planning approvals and consents in 2023/2024;
- The Swilly Way riverside walkway (a local community group has undertaken extensive work on this project in recent years, which work is acknowledged by DCC);
- The Burtonport-Letterkenny Greenway;
- Various multi modal active travel schemes across the town and town centre including a pedestrian bridge from Oldtown to the town centre, currently funded by the NTA for design;
- The Southern Network Project: aims to develop the transport network around the south of the town as a multi modal corridor to improve traffic congestion, support compact growth, and encourage a modal shift. The project is currently at Phase 2 (Option Selection). This includes the identification of potential improvement options; and
- Section 2 of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (proceeding through statutory planning process).

19.2 Strategy Development

The development of this Strategy was informed by, inter alia: the principles and hierarchy contained in the Department of Transport's NIFTI document (refer Chap. 15); the identification of key origins and attractors, and a potential network hierarchy; and the National Transport Authority's (NTA's) 'Access to Opportunities and Services' software tool (ATOS).

The Strategy incorporates several inter-related objectives, notably the identification of:

- active travel alternatives to the car;
- the connection of communities with each other and with adjacent important areas of employment, business and/or recreation; and
- the creation of permeability links within communities that encourage shorter-distance active travel journeys over more circuitous car trips.

In line with commentary in the RSES, key 'origins and 'destinations' were identified as a starting point. Map 19.1 below identifies strong residential community origins in the north-west, north, north-east, east, (coloured light blue); and south-west and west of the town (coloured light yellow) (the numbers identified on the Map represent the number of households contained in

CONSIDER FIRST

1. PEDESTRIANS

2. CYCLISTS

3. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

4. PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLES

CONSIDER LAST
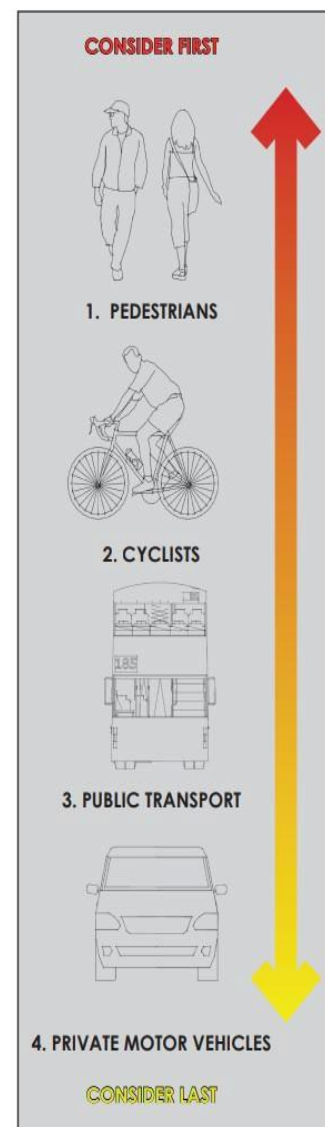
each area). The Map also identifies (in dark blue) the key attractors in the town including the town centre; the IDA Business Park and environs; the University Hospital; the LYIT; the cluster of five schools on College Road; and the cluster of leisure/recreational facilities in the west of the town including O'Donnell Park, the Aura Leisure Centre and Ballymacool Park.

Map 19.1: Locally Generated Demand – Key Origins/Attractors
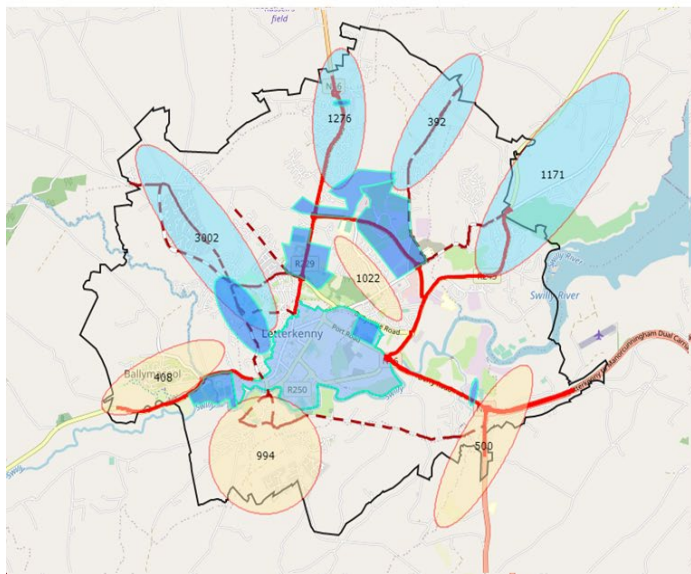
The Council's identification of origins and attractions was verified against the National Transport Authority's (NTA's) 'Access to Opportunities and Services' software tool (ATOS). This tool also identifies origins and destinations such as parks, schools, employment centres and supermarkets (refer Map 19.2 below), and demonstrates current levels of walkability, accessibility, and permeability between them. The model was used to identify current impediments to effective active travel connections, and to demonstrate the impact proposed interventions would make to the network.

MAP 19.2: Origins and Destinations/Attractors (NTA, ATOS Tool).

Origins and Destinations

23/03/2023, 07:15:15

1:36,112

| 0 | 0.17 | 0.35 | 0.7 mi |
| 0 | 0.28 | 0.55 | 1.1 km |
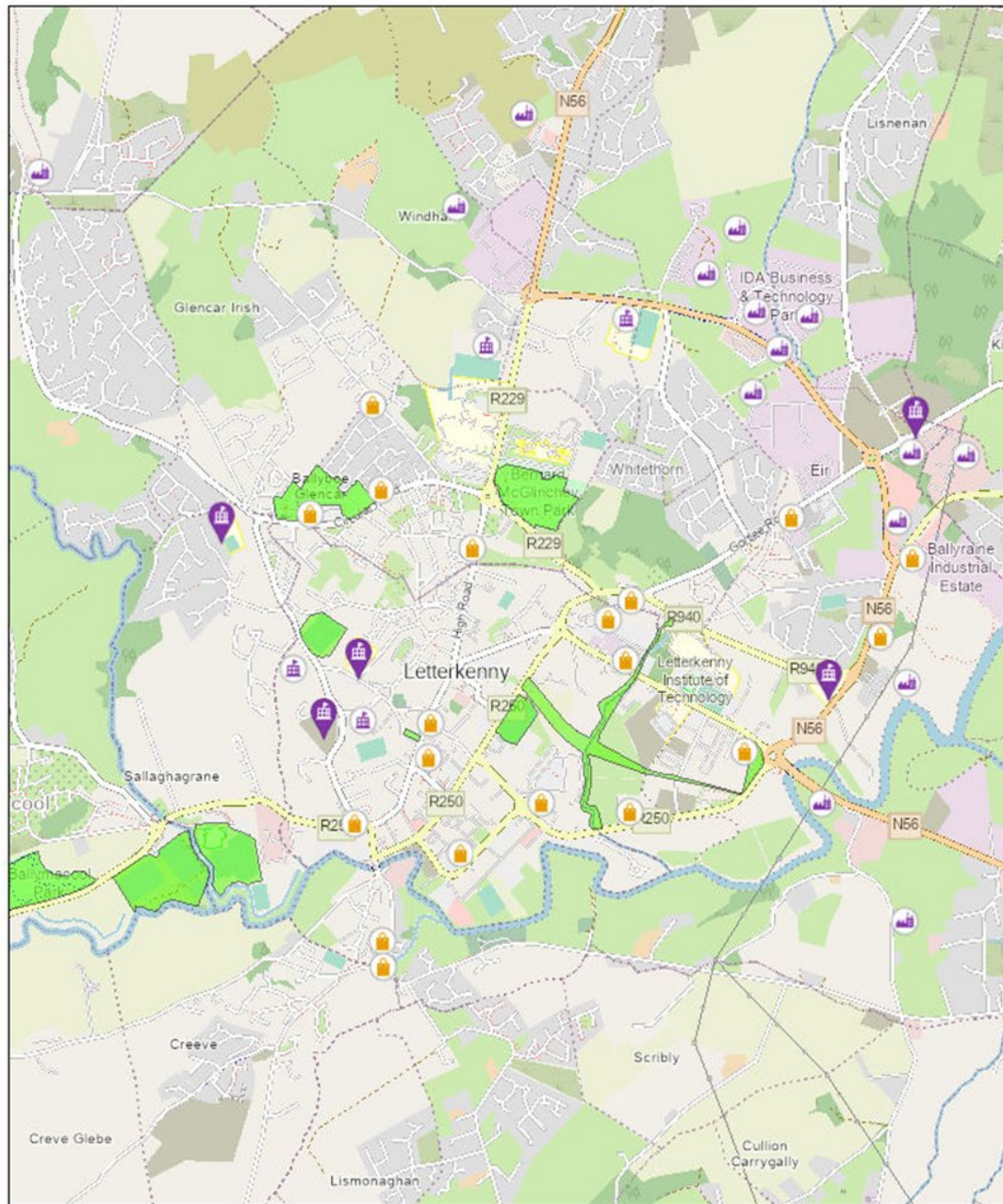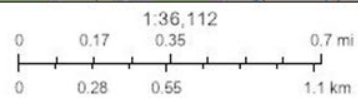
Revised ATOS Models - Supermarkets

Revised ATOS Models -Primary Schools

Revised ATOS Models - Post - Primary School

Revised ATOS Models - Donegal_Parks

Revised ATOS Models - General Employment

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Facebook, Inc. and its affiliates, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri

ArcGIS Web AppBuilder
Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Facebook, Inc. and its affiliates, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri |

Having identified the key origins and destinations, opportunities for making the connections were then examined. A network comprised of the following hierarchy was identified:

Strategic Multi-Modal Network Projects

Interconnecting routes comprising of existing road and footpath walking and cycling networks identified for new interventions and improvements creating a wider connected network for walking and cycling between key origins and destinations;

Town centre interventions on existing networks as identified in the 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan' developed under the Council's 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration' project; and

Neighbourhood-scale permeability links.

Throughout this process, a key objective was to improve active travel connectivity between communities. The key opportunities in this regard are identified in Fig. 19.1 below.

Figure 19.1: Connecting Communities
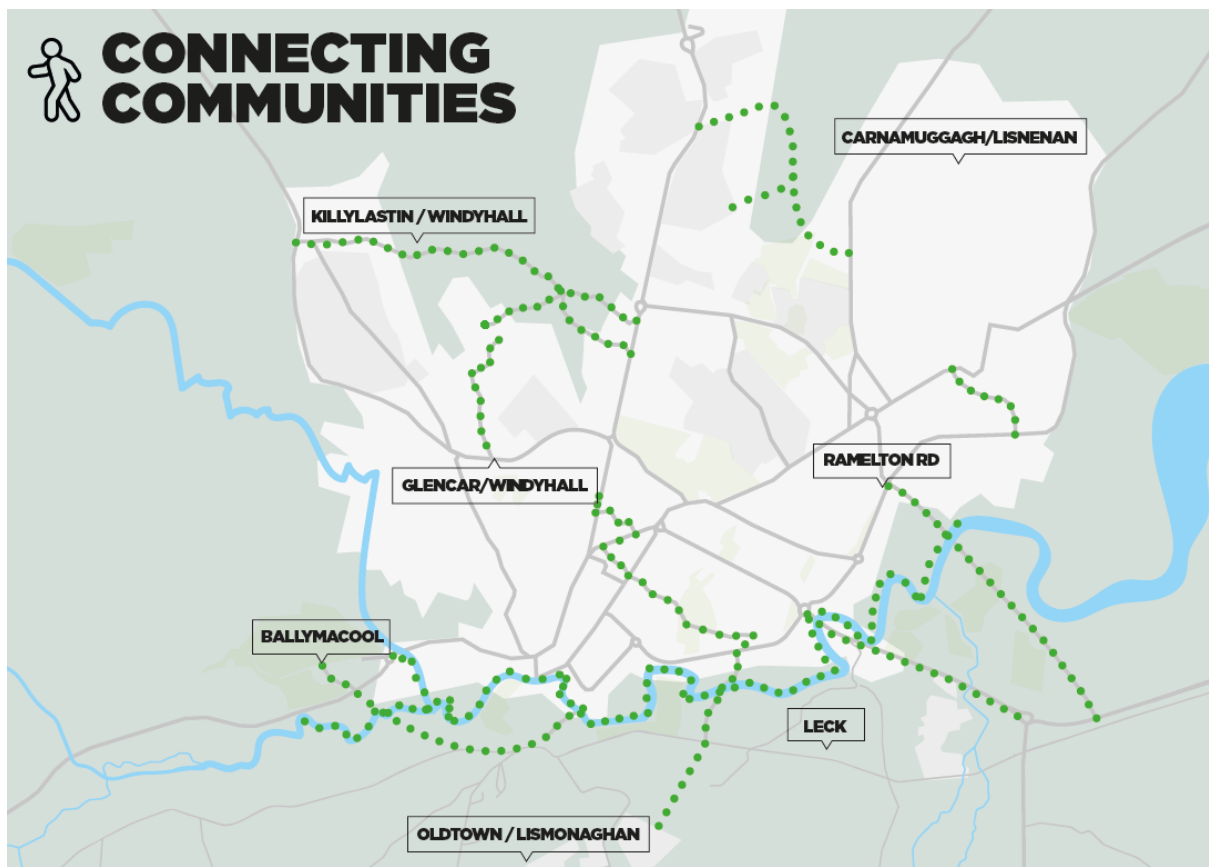
19.3 Walking/Pedestrian Strategy

The Walking/Pedestrian Strategy was conceived on a town-wide basis. However, this section focuses on key routes outside of the town centre only; proposals for the town centre are addressed in Chapter 21: 'Town Centre Strategy'.

The Strategy for outside of the centre includes the interventions listed in Table 19.1 and identified on Map 19.3 below (nb. there are a small number of overlaps with town centre projects also addressed in Chapter 21).

Table 19.1: Key Walking Projects Outside of Town Centre

	Proposed/Upgrade Strategic Network Projects (Multi Modal infrastructure - walking and cycling inclusive of crossing points as required - to be incorporated into strategic transport network upgrades)		
SM1	TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (Donegal TEN-T), Section 2		
SM2	N56 Four Lane (improvement project completed 2023) including potential future 'Park and Share Hub' at eastern end'		
SM3	N56 Polestar Roundabout to Creamery Roundabout		
SM4	N56 Business Park Road		
SM5	Western Network Project		
SM6	Southern Network Project		
SM7	N56 Knocknamona Roundabout to Mountain Top Roundabout		
SM8	Northern Network Project		
Interconnecting Routes			
IC1	High Road *		
IC2	Circular Road *		
IC3	Convent Road (Upper) *		
IC4	Convent Road (Lower)/Plunkett O'Boyle Terrace		
IC5	R250 Ballymacool Roundabout to Lower Main Street Roundabout *		
IC6	Knocknamona Roundabout to Hospital Roundabout		
IC9	R940 Ramelton Road/Ballyraine Road		
IC10	Gortlee Road		
IC11	Old Farm Road		
IC12	Glencar Road *		
IC13	Ramelton Road		
IC14	Mkt Sq. to Cathedral Area		
IC15	Scribly/Leck/Town Centre, Inclusive of Swilly Bridge Crossing (nb. refer to Policy LK-H-P-10 and associated narrative re 'Southern Strategic and Sustainable Development Site/Southern Network Project')		
IC16	Leck (vicinity of new Cemetery)/Town Centre (vicinity of Cinema), inclusive of Swilly Active Travel Bridge		
IC17	De Valera Road		
IC18	Swilly River Corridor		
IC19	Lurgybrack		
Key Northwest Area Connections/Improvements			
		Land Use Plan Site-Specific Zoning	**Site-Specific Policy Ref. and Associated Design Guide**
NW1	Grange Road		

| NW2 | Long Mile Road | | |
| NW3 | Glencar/Long Lane/Windyhall * | PR6 and OPP8 | LK-H-P-9e and LK-OPP-8 |

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Local Permeability/Connectivity Improvements
(nb. Most of the Permeability Links route through sites zoned for development potential in Part A: Land Use Planning Policies. Where relevant, these zonings and associated specific policies are also identified below)</td></tr>
</table>

		Land Use Plan Site-Specific Zoning	Site-Specific Policy Ref. and Associated Design Guide
LP1	Carnamuggagh	OPP10	LK-OPP-10
LP2	Kiltoy	PR1	LK-H-P-9a
LP3	Gortlee	OPP4 and OPP7	LK-OPP-4 and LK-OPP-7
LP4	Ballyraine	OPP5	LK-OPP-5
LP5	Oldtown	OPP9	LK-OPP-9
LP6	Ballymacool	PR13	
LP7	New Line Road 1 *	PR3	LK-H-P-9b
LP8	New Line Road 2	PR4	LK-H-P-9c
LP9	Glencar Rd/'The Elms'	PR5	LK-H-P-9d
LP10	Gortlee House/Kilmacrenan Road/De Valera Road *	OPP1	LK-OPP-1
LP11	High Road/Former Oatfield Site *	PR9/OPP11	n/a
LP12	Killylastin	n/a	
LP13	Crieve Road	n/a	
LP14	Willowbrook-College Farm Road (serving Gael Scoil Adhamháin/St. Bernadette's Special School/St. Eunan's College	n/a	

Schemes denoted with an asterisk (*) were assessed under **a Multi-Criteria Analysis Framework process (MCAF)** to provide a high-level evidence base for their development. The Council is currently progressing some of these schemes through detailed design stage.

Full details of **MCAF assessments** are contained in Appendix D. Further detailed analysis and design will be required as all projects are developed. All schemes were assessed in accordance with the following criteria: *Accessibility, Adaptability, Attractiveness, Coherence, Comfort, Deliverability, Directness, Safety, Socio-Economic* and rated accordingly.

Map 19.3: Walking/Pedestrian Strategy
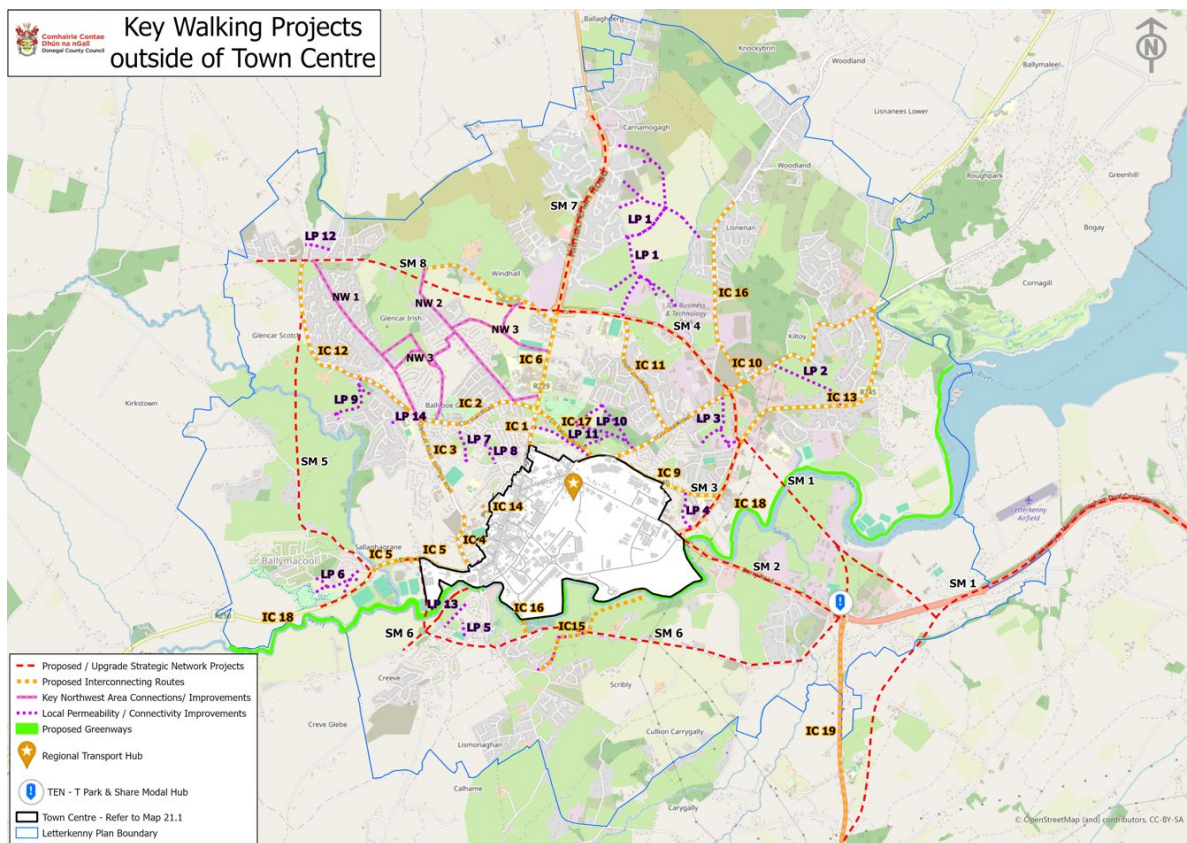
19.3.1 Sub-Areas

1. West of the Town:

The cluster of schools in the vicinity of Convent Road are Key destinations/attractors in this part of the town (refer Map 19.2: '**Origins and Destinations/Attractors: (NTA, ATOS Tool).** Convent Road also connects the large residential areas to the north with the town centre and other attractors to the south.

Proposed Improvements:

The Cathedral One Way project was completed in November 2022 and successfully converted portions of Convent Rd, Cathedral Road and Castle St. to one-way traffic flow around the school precinct. The reduction in carriageway width required to accommodate the one-way system allowed the reallocation of the existing road pavement and construction of widened pedestrian facilities through the area. The widened footpaths along with traffic calming measures and formalised courtesy crossings have helped provided a safer environment for vulnerable road users through a busy area.

As part of the current NTA Active Travel works package for Letterkenny schemes have been included to the north (identified on Map 19.3 as IC3) and south (IC4) of the Cathedral One Way system providing improved pedestrian facilities and linkages to Circular Rd and Ballymacool Terrace. These schemes are progressing through the approval process outlined in the NTA Project Approval Guidelines and are scheduled for delivery in the coming years.

ATOS Tool Proposed Enhancement

The ATOS tool identified a potential permeability link between Willowbrook and College Farm Road adjoining residential area (identified as LP14 on Map 19.3**).** This link would benefit local families and children attending the nearby Gael Scoil Adhamháin School, St. Bernadette's Special School and St. Eunan's College school by creating a desire line between the two, thereby reducing walking and cycling time. The difference between the first model run on the left side of Fig. 19.2 and the second model rerun on the right-hand side illustrate the potential improvement. The increase in red and yellow on the right-hand side indicates a higher level of access and connectivity.
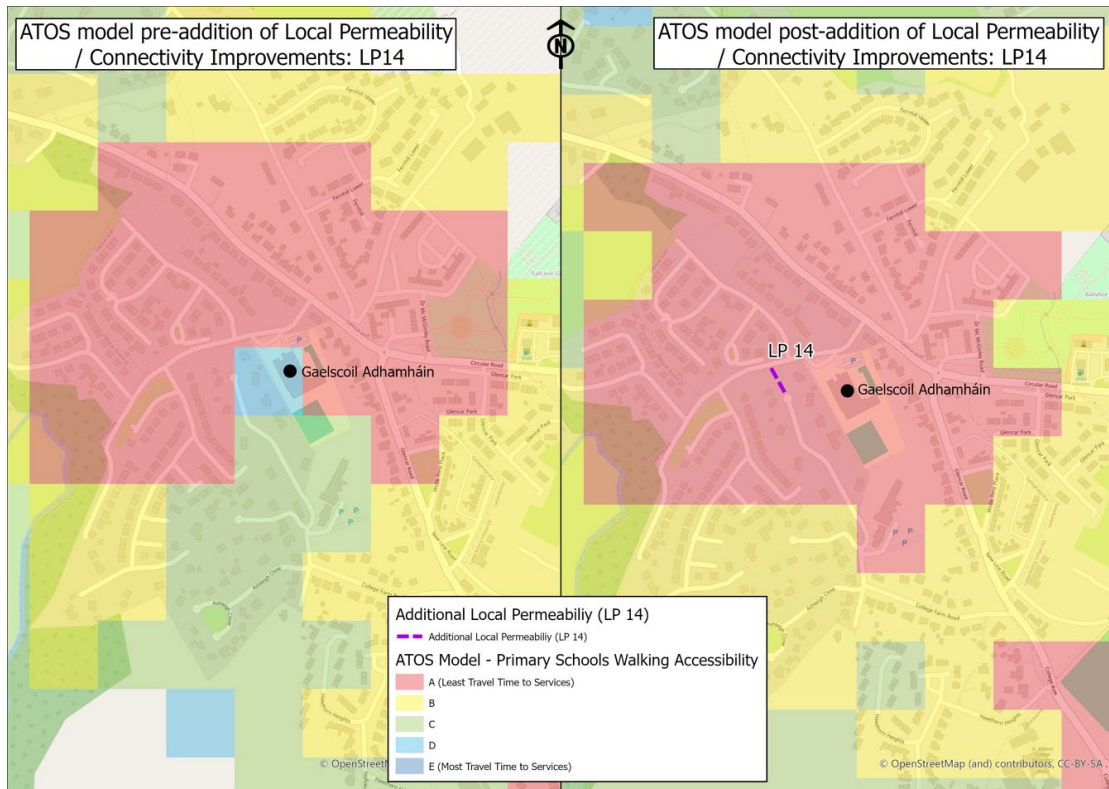
2. North & North-West:

The North and North-West, centred on the townlands of Glencar Irish and Glencar Scotch, is the most populated in the town, containing over 3,000 residential properties. The area contains several key road arteries, including Windyhall Road, Grange Road and Glencar Road, but little by way of walking (or cycling) infrastructure.

Modal share of Journeys made for work to the Glencar/LUH area from within Letterkenny for work (CSO,2016.)

Walk 15%
Cycle 2%
Bus 1%
Car 82%
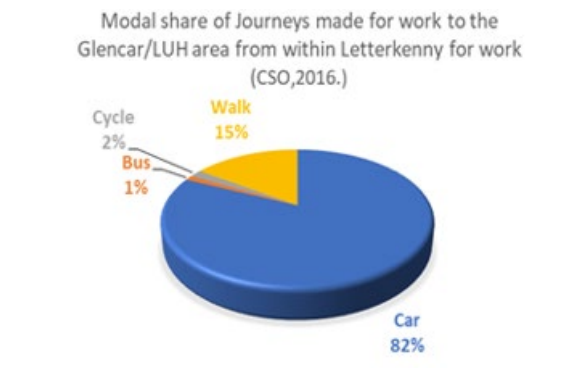
Large numbers of trips originate in this area, whether to: the local schools, Letterkenny University hospital (LUH), Ballyboe Park, the Bernard Mc Glinchey Town Park, and the town centre via Convent Road and High Road to the south; or to the large employers to the east. As can be seen from the pie char above, the highest percentage of residents' journeys are made by private car (CSO, 2016). This pattern arises because, inter alia:

- The spatial pattern of development is largely devoid of internal pedestrian permeable links or desire lines between residential housing estates, especially in the areas of Glencar Scotch and Glencar Irish, due mainly to the cul-de-sac designs devoid of connections to adjacent phases. This discourages even short active travel journeys between estates.
- The local topography and elevation of the upper areas relative to the location of many significant attractors in the town, plus the distances between the two, discourage return active travel journeys. The current inadequate active travel network is a further disincentive for the making of such journeys.

The pre-draft public consultation results identified a keen interest of residents to use active travel modes, subject to the development of dedicated infrastructure, with 58% stating they would be likely to walk, or cycle compared with 6% and 1% of respondents who currently walk or cycle.

Q6: 6. A If you are not a frequent pedestrian or cyclist in Letterkenny is this likely to change if the town had dedicated walking and cycling lanes?

Answered: 536 Skipped: 0

Likely	
Neither likely nor unlikely	
Unlikely	

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
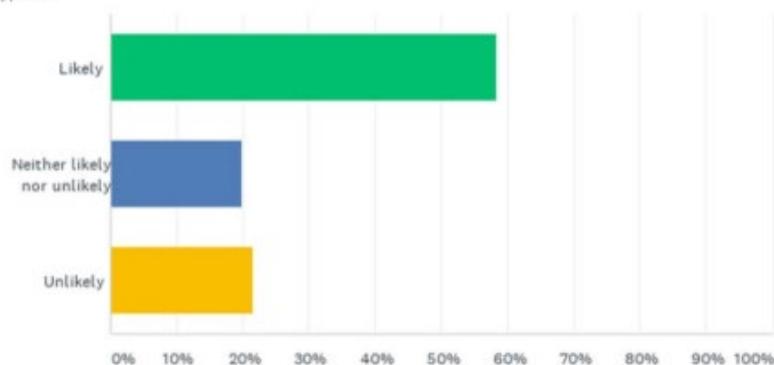
Proposed Improvements:

This Plan therefore identifies significant walking projects (also suitable for cycle) for this part of the town both for north-south trips (refer projects IC12, NW1 and NW2 on Map 19.3) and east-west trips (refer projects NW3, IC2 and SM8).

The Northern Network Project (Ref. SM8) is being designed as a multi-modal project to provide for walking, cycling and public transport, as well as motorists. The scheme will provide active travel commuting options for the residents residing at its western end and employed at its eastern end in, inter alia, the IDA Business Park.

Circular Road runs along the southern edge of, and is a key transport artery for, the Glencar area. There are important facilities adjacent to Circular Road itself, including Ballyboe Park and Glencar Neighbourhood Centre. In addition, it also provides an important link between the north-west of the town at its western end, and services on its eastern end including the Hospital, access to the town centre, and access to the strategic road network. Circular Road currently accommodates eight turning lanes serving accesses both north and south of the road for residential estates and the Glencar neighbourhood centre. The envisaged project for Circular Road (ref. IC2) incorporates proposals to remove the turning lanes and narrow the carriageway, in addition to using the roadside grass verges to create walking provision on the existing footpath and two-way cycle lane provision on reallocated carriageway. Upon completion of the Scheme the road will continue to function as an important arterial link for motorized traffic but will also present a much safer environment for pedestrians.

3. East of the Town

This is a settled, popular and long-established area of the town with significant concentrations of housing, small neighbourhood services and other enterprises on Old Farm Road, Gortlee and Ballyraine Road. This area also contains several schools including Gaelscoil Colasite Ailiagh on Old Farm Road, Educate Together on Kiltoy Road and Ballyraine National School on Ramelton Road. The town centre and LYIT lie to the south and are connected by the arterial Ramelton Road and Gortlee Road. The IDA Business Park lies immediately to the north. The N56 National Secondary Road serving strategic traffic also traverses through this area.

Modal share of Journeys made for work to the Business Park Road area from within Letterkenny, (CSO, 2016).

Walk, 90, 17%
Cycle, 14, 2%
Bus, 0, 0%
Car, 436, 81%
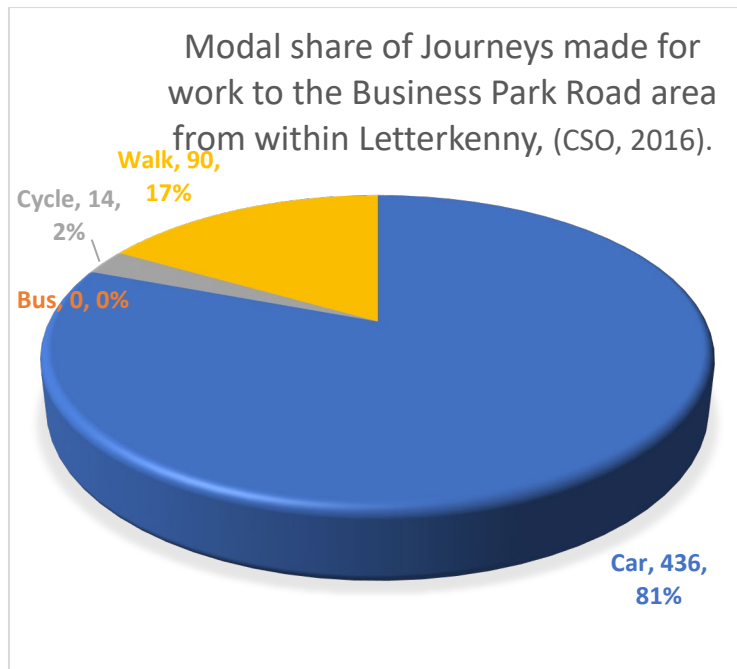
The large employers in the IDA Business Park Road generates a high level of internal and inward commuting journeys to this part of the town. The pie chart above shows that 81% of journeys to this destination for the purpose of work are made by the private car. The low level of sustainable modes movements to the area of the town with the highest level of employment (outside of the town centre), can be attributed, to some extent, to the lack of sustainable modes linkages between the area and key residential origins. At present, cycle provision is by way of a combination of advisory cycle lanes and shared provision for walking and cycling on footpaths.

The modal share pie chart below again illustrates the dominance of the private car with 79% of journeys made in this area using this mode with walking 19%, cycling 2% and public transport 0% respectively.

Modal share of journeys made for work to the Ramelton road and LYIT area from within Letterkenny (CSO, 2016).

Walk, 64, 19%
Cycle, 8, 2%
Bus, 0, 0%
Car, 270, 79%
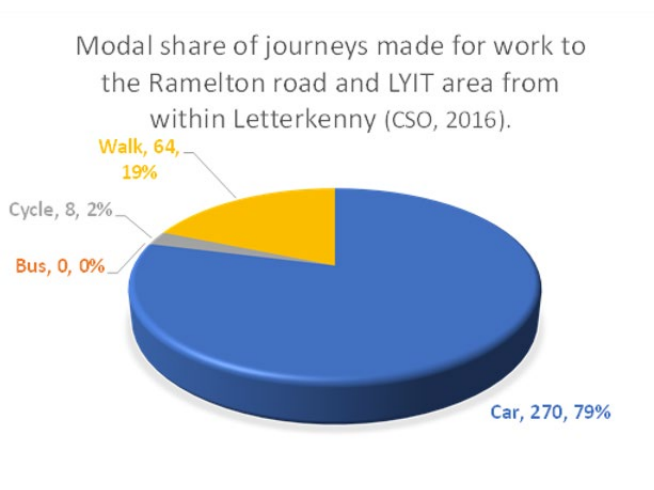
The relatively higher rate of walking can be attributed mainly to students living within walking distance of the LYIT during the academic year. This is an encouraging marker going forward given that 58% of pre-survey respondents stated that they would be likely to choose walking (or cycling) following the commitment of dedicated walking and cycling infrastructure in the town.

Proposed Improvements:

The key objectives for this area include improving the walkability to and from the employers on the Business Park Road to the north, and the town centre and LYIT to the south. The schemes identified on Map 19.3 as IC10 (Gortlee Road) and IC11 (Old Farm Road) will deliver such improvements for local residents and other uses alike. Another key measure in this part of the town will be the incorporation of two signalised pedestrian crossings on the N56 Business Park Road as part of a wider strategic traffic management scheme on that road (Scheme SM4 refers).

4.   Town Centre

(Please refer to Section 21: 'Town Centre Transport Strategy).

19.4: Cycling Strategy

National 'Cycle Connect'

In consultation with the National Transport Authority (NTA),the Cycling Strategy is based largely on the potential cycling network for Letterkenny identified in the NTA's 'CycleConnects' document. Additional projects reflecting the multi-modal nature of various strategic transport projects impacting on the town are also included (refer Map 19.4

The 'CycleConnects' project 'aims to improve sustainable travel by providing the potential for more trips on a safe, accessible and convenient cycling network, connecting more people to more places'. Proposals for cycling links in key cities, towns and villages in each county are included in the plan, in addition to connections between the larger towns, villages and settlements. The plan also incorporates existing and planned cycle routes such as Greenways and Blueways.

Map 19.4 Cycling Network

Cycle Network - National Cycle Connect
(Reproduced with permission from the NTA)

Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council

Donegal Cycle Connect
— Primary,Existing
— Secondary,Existing
- - Secondary,Proposed
— Greenway,Existing
- - Greenway,Proposed
— Interurban,Existing

Town Centre Boundary
Town Centre Boundary

Settlement Framework Boundary
Settlement Framework Boundary

19.5 Additional Complementary Measures

Several schemes have been, or are being, developed at a national level such as behavioral change programmes or incentivized schemes with the aim of encouraging more active travel trips to and from school and reducing reliance on the private car.

19.5.1 Schools

There is a low level of active travel to schools, particularly for primary schools, in Letterkenny with resulting high levels of car usage for these relatively short trips. This has been the focus of collaborative work in recent years between DCC and the NTA with a view to making walking to schools a more realistic option.

19.5.2 An Taisce Green Schools

The An Taisce Green Schools programme is Ireland's leading environmental management and education programme for schools and promotes long-term action for the environment. One of the programme's themes is 'Transport' which aims to increase the number of students walking, cycling, scooting, using public transport or carpooling to school by using action plans to promote and increase these numbers. See Map 19.5 below that depicts current low levels of active travel to and from schools (CSO, 2016).

Dedicated regional Green Schools Officers assist in developing the programme with individual schools at all levels across the county, one of the main outputs being the development of walkability audits and identification of suitable locations for park and stride sites in close proximity (between 300m and 1km) to schools. These locations act as alternative drop off/pick up locations which encourage students to walk some of the distance to school, increasing exercise, mental awareness and reducing the risk of accidents, congestion and pollution at the front of the school gate. The Council's Road Safety Team continues to work with green schools across the county in active travel infrastructure implementation and to find improved ways of removing the pressure from outside of schools at peak times.

Map 19.5
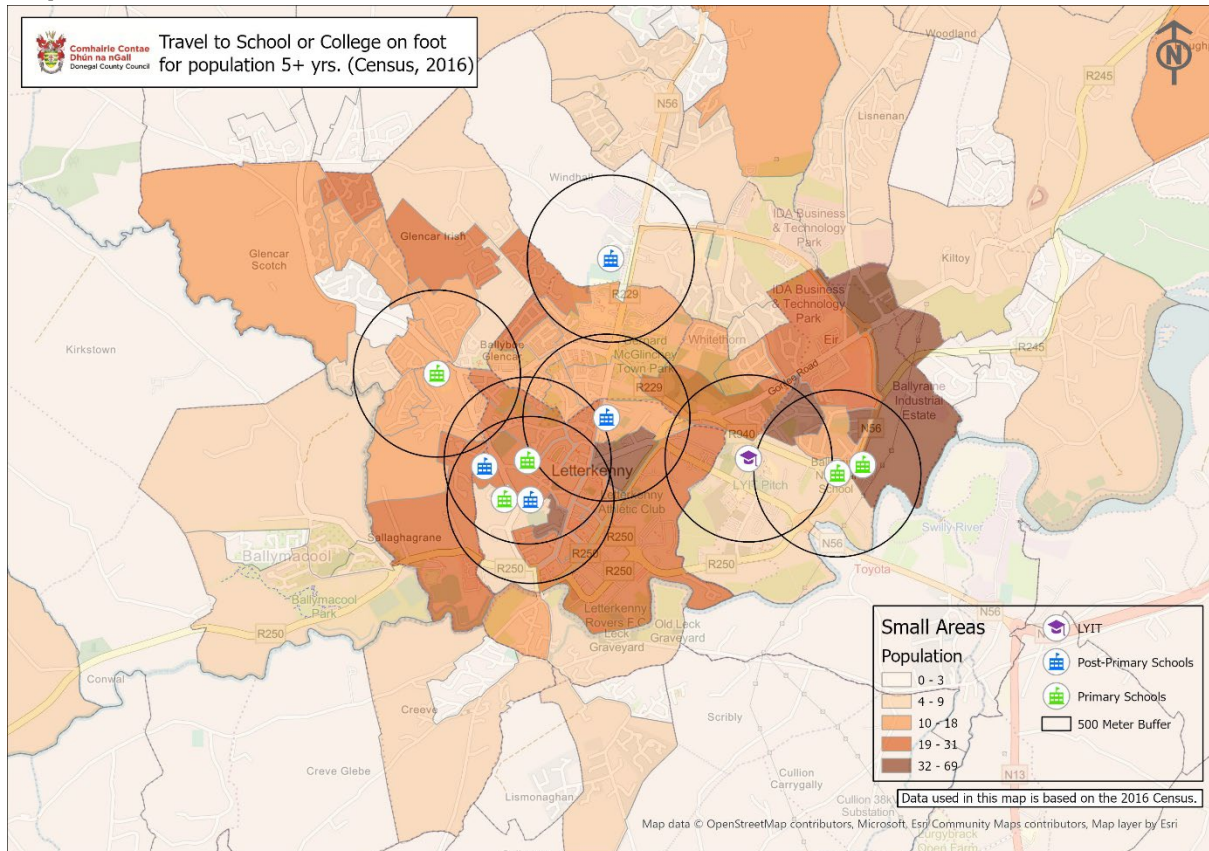
19.5.3 Behavioural Change Programmes

A significant body of work has been initiated and developed by the schools over the past number of years through their individual walkability audits. This has resulted in significant awareness raising and behavioral change with regard to sustainable mobility to and from schools. In addition, in March 2021 the Government announced the Safer Route to Schools Programme (SRTSP) which is a country-wide initiative designed to encourage as many pupils and students as possible in primary and post-primary schools to walk and cycle. The Programme model is based on partnership between the NTA, An Taisce Green Schools (ATGS) and the Local Authorities.

In this regard DCC have recently completed a significant transformative traffic management project in the Cathedral Road, Convent Road, College Row and Sentry Hill areas of the town. Changes involve a one-way traffic flow running clockwise from St. Eunan's Cathedral to St Colmcille NS, St. Eunan's College and Scoil Mhuire gan Small. One of the biggest impacts to be felt is the addition of footpaths in areas where they were absent, providing a 'Safer route to school' in an area of the town that accommodates 4 schools.

The scheme will improve traffic movement, increase footpath width, provide new footpaths and to make the conditions safer to encourage Active travel from students and families and improve conditions as set out in Map 19.2 above. **Main aims are:**

1. To accelerate the delivery of walking/scooting and cycling infrastructure on key access routes to schools.
2. To provide "front of school" treatments to enhance access to school grounds.
3. To expand the amount of bike parking available at schools.

19.5.4 Community Bike Hire scheme:

The introduction of a community bike hire scheme as a local public facility and transport service would create a new means of movement and circulation within the town. Such a scheme, and especially if electric, could help address the currently low rates of cycling to work and college due to the barriers that currently exist within the town such as topography and access to a bike. Users need not own a bicycle but can still gain the advantages of using one on a regular basis for a nominal fee, including monthly and yearly rental options.

Community bike hire scheme anticipated benefits to Letterkenny:

1. **Environmental Benefits;**
   - Uses minimal fossil fuels and is a pollution-free mode of transport.
   - Reduce congestion of cars in urban areas, creating cleaner air in built up areas.
   - Cycling conserves roadway and residential space, thereby providing opportunities for less concrete and more plant life in urban areas.

2. **Community Benefits;**
   - Fewer cars and car dependency which can lead to a safer road environment. Improving environment for cycling to school.
   - When people walk or ride a bike as transport, they are more likely to use local businesses for their shopping.
   - Riding enables people to interact socially and feel more connected with their local community

3. **Social Benefits**
   - Affordable and independent travel for those who might otherwise have restricted travel options.
   - Offers increased mobility to many groups of the population such as low income earners, seniors and those under 18 years of age.
   - Construction of shared active travel infrastructure creates benefits for pedestrians and vulnerable road users by providing an increased network of paths and improved road crossings

4. **Economic Benefits**
   - Savings in fuel costs,
   - The local economy may benefit from increased footfall on the active travel journeys.

19.5.5 The 15 Minute City

'The 15-minute City' is a new urban planning concept and represents current innovative thinking around a de-centralised urban centre. It is a relatively new concept of an accessible and connected urban core where all services and uses coexist and can be reached within a 15-minute radius of home by foot or bicycle. Whilst the buzz word might be new, the concept is not and ties in with the long-standing ambitions and targets of compact urban growth and the 'centre out' urban areas. This will assist in lowering carbon emissions, reducing car dependency with a modal shift to sustainable modes, repopulating declining town cores and creating active travel infrastructure. This new and evolving ideology of a 15-minute city would address a number of significant objectives within both the Letterkenny Plan and Local transport Plan.

19.6 Active Travel Policies and Objectives

LTP-AT-O-1: To provide for an increase in active travel through an expansion of parks, public realm and the strategic, inter-connecting and permeability walking and cycling networks in Letterkenny.

LTP-AT-O-2: To support the progress and implementation of the 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy's 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan' and 'Letterkenny Design Concepts' and to support any future subsequent phases of the project as funded under the URDF.

LTP-AT-0-3: To support the development and implementation of pilot mobility schemes for the encouragement and development of multi-modal travel in Letterkenny.

LTP-AT-O-4: To support the delivery of the National Transport Authority's National Cycle Network 'CycleConnect' and the development of an extensive cycling network across the county.

LTP-AT-P-1: It is a policy of the Council to:
a) Not permit development that would prejudice the implementation of any active travel scheme as set out on the Land Use Zoning Map, Map 19.3 'Walking/Pedestrian Strategy' or Map 19.4: 'Cycling Strategy'.
b) Incorporate active travel infrastructure into Strategic Roads projects;
c) Utilize existing footpaths and roads, and off-line routes identified on the Land Use Zoning Map or Map 19.2: Active Travel Overview and as opportunities arise, for the purpose of the development of 'Local Scale' and 'Interconnecting Arterial' walking and cycling routes.

LTP-AT-P-2: It is a policy of the Council to:
a. Require that all new proposed development(s) where appropriate, shall include active travel connectivity using permeability desire lines including filtered pedestrian permeability link(s) to adjoining land uses where such links would serve a meaningful purpose in terms of promoting active travel and/or connecting to a wider walking and cycle network. Detailed design of such links shall be agreed at pre-planning design stage, thereafter incorporated into finalized schemes, and delivered by the developer. This policy shall be applied to secure the delivery of those Schemes listed in Table 19.1 and other opportunities that may present;
b. ensure new residential and commercial development(s) shall be designed to the latest DMURS[3] standards, unless precluded by space or other constraints, to be accessible and permeable for pedestrians, cyclists, vulnerable road users and those of reduced mobility.

LTP AT-P-3: It is a policy of the Council to continue to work with the National Transport Authority to enable the development of a future electric bike, including other electric scooters, hire scheme for the town.

Greenway

LTP-AT-P-4: It is a policy of the Council to support the development of the Letterkenny to Burtonport Strategic Greenway route as it affects the lands within the Letterkenny Plan boundary and to ensure that it integrates effectively with active travel initiatives within the town**.**

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[3] DMURS- Design manual for urban roads and streets

Chapter 20 - Public Transport Strategy

20.1 Existing Bus Services

At present Letterkenny is served by one town bus service provided by a single private operator offering one bus daily across 2 routes with intermittent frequency. The service covers a wide catchment with 7 different service patterns utilising a looped route that creates long diversions. Improvements to the existing public bus network are necessary in order to offer a realistic alternative to the car. Such services should be more convenient, attractive and of higher frequency, thereby offering a realistic alternative to use of the private car. Walk-ability and accessibility from origins will be a central objective in the planning and design of all new transport infrastructure and public transport networks by ensuring convenient active travel networks to and from bus stops is available with particular regard to the town centre.

## 20.2 Proposed Additional Public Transport Service(s)

Significant consultation and collaboration have taken place to date, and is ongoing, with the National Transport Authority (NTA) on developing additional bus services for the town. A key aim of this work is to ensure that the services and routes are optimized to meet passenger demand commensurate with the resources allocated at this current time. Route planning and enhancing the network must also take account of the existing town centre traffic regime and the location of the proposed town centre multi modal transport hub, as identified in the 2040 Regeneration Strategy.

Notwithstanding the significant body of work completed to-date in identifying the emerging preferred route alignments, the route alignment suggested in Map 20.1 below is subject to further change until it reaches the final stage in the NTA process. Therefore, the contents of Map 20.1 should be considered as indicative only at this stage. The finalised service expansion will be strongly influenced by, and proposals are also subject to:

- Identification of potential stop locations (subject to the approval of the relevant Roads Authority).
- Potential non-statutory consultation on route alignments and service specification (subject to approval of local authority)
- Development of detailed stop designs including road safety audit as required (subject to approval).
- Development of draft timetables and sectional runtimes to integrate proposed routes and the wider transport network.
- Detailed examination of routes to identify potential physical network constraints.
- Identification and detailed design of suitable locations for termini, bus turnaround facilities and regulatory layover (subject to the approval of the relevant Roads Authority).
- Discussions with landowners and other stake holders as required in instances where buses are planned to operate on lands not in public ownership / charge of the Local Authority (e.g.: HSE campuses, Retail Outlets, etc.).

Map 20.1: Public Bus Networks
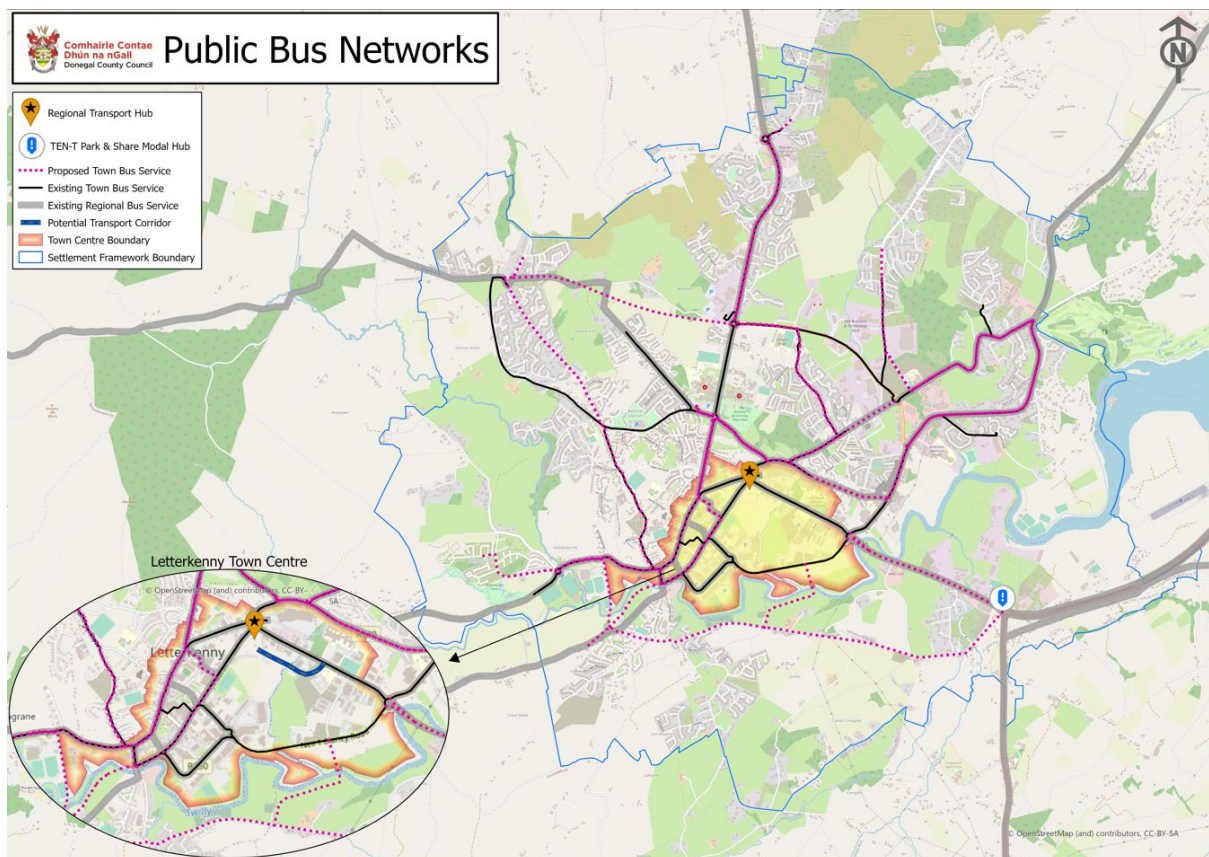
In addition to the above-noted measures, the roll-out of The NTA's 'Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan' should augment and complement the future enhanced public transport offering in the town as set out above.

20.3 Proposed Intervention Measures for Implementation of an Enhanced Town Centre Public Transport Network

This section describes the measures that are likely to be required to enable the development of an efficient and effective public bus network within the town centre, inclusive of associated measures to improve public transport integration with other modes, particularly walking and cycling, and easy connection to the future multimodal transport hub. The Council will work with all relevant stakeholders and responsible authorities to develop these measures.

o **Re-imagining The Character and Functioning of Main Steet:**

~ **Increasing the public realm pedestrian space and pedestrian priority by means of reallocating on-street public car parking.**

~ **Creating temporary partial pedestrianisation through the installation of retractable bollards at strategic locations, (as supported by the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy).**

~ **Prioritising public transport access, inclusive of the provision of a two-way interchange for public transport between certain points along the Main Street. This will allow for greater pedestrian wayfinding especially for vulnerable members of society by creating bus drop off and pick up points on opposite sides of the same street.**

o **Comprehensive Car Parking Study: The availability of cheap and plentiful car-parking spaces both public and private within the town centre makes the shift from the private car to sustainable modes difficult to accomplish. This Council has therefore identified the need for the preparation of an effective car parking strategy including pricing. This is an objective of this council.**

o **Park and Ride/Park and Share Hubs:**

The Council has identified various satellite villages and other locations around Letterkenny in which the provision of hubs for parking and continuation of journeys by walking, cycling or by bus could be effective in reducing peak-time car congestion in the town (see Map 20.2 below).

**Map 20.2: Potential Park and Ride Hubs**
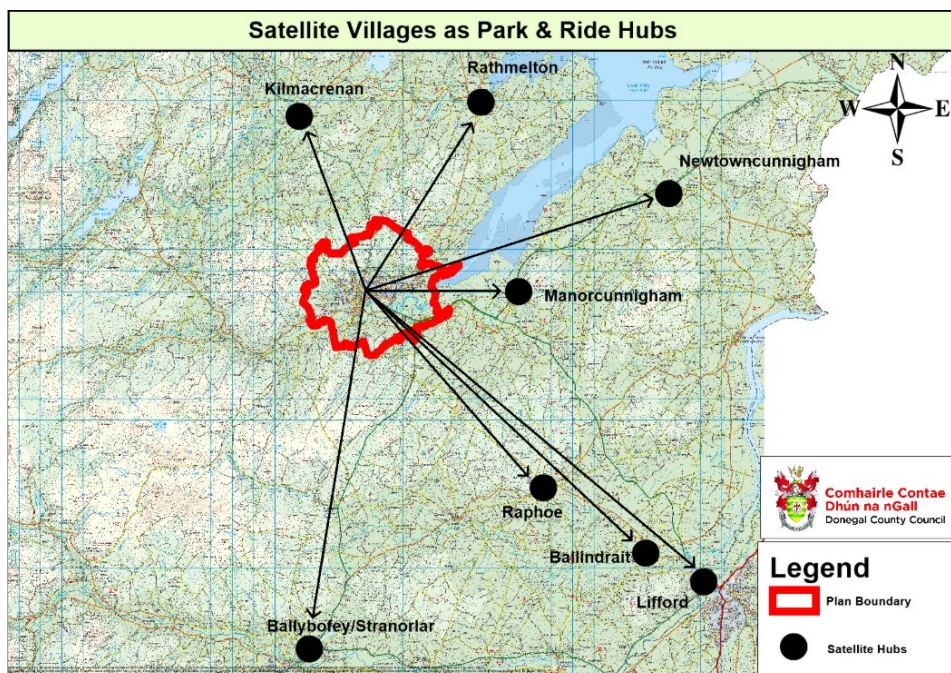
The proposals for Kilmacrenan, Ramelton, Manorcunningham, and Newtowncunningham were identified through this Plan process. Those projects in and around Ballybofey/Stranorlar, Lifford, Ballindrait and Raphoe are planned as part of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal. The site inside of the Plan boundary is proposed for the Bonagee area.

Fig. 20.1: TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal Proposed Modal Hubs
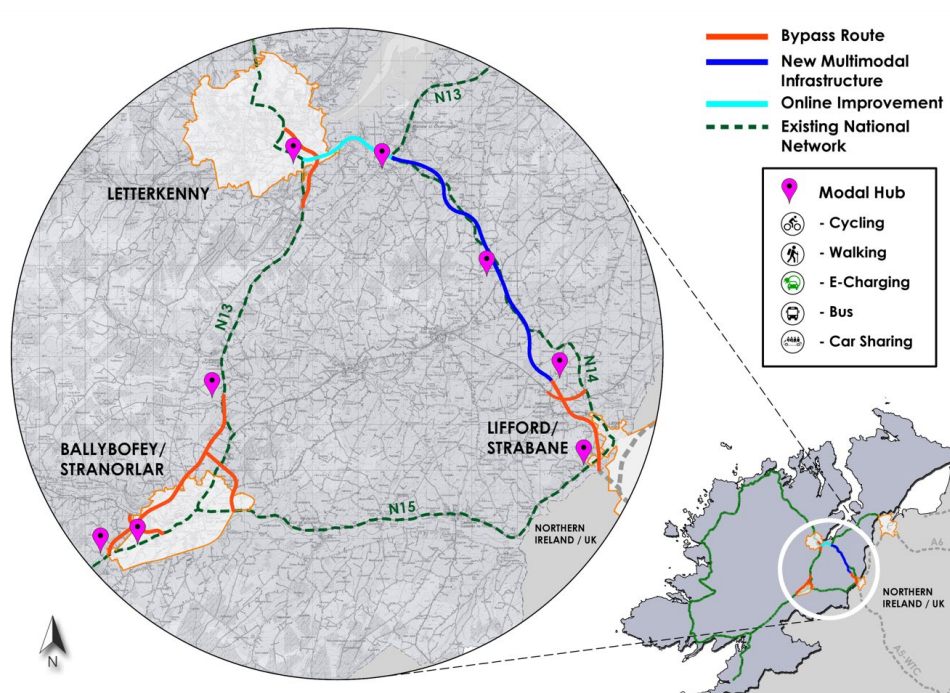
The Council will continue to consult with the NTA and TII to progress these hubs with a view to ensuring that they are serviced by regular and efficient 'Connecting Ireland' and 'Local link' public transport services.

o **Bus Priority Lanes: The identification of bus priority lanes will be a priority for the Council over the course of the Plan period. Map 20.1 (see Inset) identifies a potential Public Transport Corridor off the Port Road serving the proposed transport hub.**

o **The Council's 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan' identifies a range of pedestrian, cycle and public realm projects designed to improve the existing environment for active travel choice. These improvements will, inter alia, encourage active travel mobility to and from the proposed multi-modal transport hub and other bus-stops.**

o **It is expected that there will be a significant increase in the uptake and use of electric vehicles and other low-carbon mobility technologies such as electric cars, bikes and scooters during this Plan period. The Council will seek to support this increase through the provision of parking and charging infrastructure in the town centre and publicly accessible locations, where it is feasible to do so. DCC will endeavour to work with TII and the NTA regarding support for longer-distance travel via electric vehicles, including providing for hybrid public transport.**

o **It is an objective of the Council to seek to restore rail services within the county and to work with all regional and national stakeholders to ensure this is fully explored.**

20.4 General Objectives and Policies

LTP-PT-O-1: To deliver significantly enhanced public transport services and facilities for Letterkenny.

LTP-PT-O-2: To encourage a modal shift from use of the private car towards more sustainable modes of transport.

LTP-PT-O-3: To engage and work closely with the National Transport Authority and other relevant transport authorities and both public and private operators, in facilitating and securing improvements to and the expansion of public transport infrastructure and services in the town.

**LTP-PT-O-4:** To support the NTA's 'Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan'.

LTP-PT-P-1: It is a policy of the council to:

a.   Continue to collaborate with the NTA and all other stakeholders to develop the provision of new public transport services and the necessary physical interventions that enable the expansion of Letterkenny's public transport service, to provide an efficient, frequent, effective and legible public transport bus service to serve the needs of the town.

b.   Provide a service that will connect origins and destinations throughout the town including residential, education, healthcare facilities, employment and the future multi modal transport hub, by way of a local bus service.

c.   Support bus priority infrastructure particularly in the town centre, through the identification of a network of roads for the development of bus priority roads and lanes.

d.   Identify suitable locations for the development of 'Park and Share/Ride Hubs' located within a network of strategic satellite villages (identified, but not limited to, those on Map 20.2) serviced by efficient and effective public transport routes and providers such as 'Connecting Ireland' and 'Local Link'.

e.   Provide new supporting public transport infrastructure in Letterkenny Town Centre to include, inter alia: bus stops, shelter infrastructure including real time passenger information, electric modes charging infrastructure, bicycle parking and provision of electric bike/scooter hire.

f.   Support the delivery of the proposed public transport interventions measures listed in Section 20.3.

20.5 Rail Overview

Public transport including Rail plays a key role in providing a future sustainable alternative to motorised transport for longer journeys and contributes towards achieving Ireland's sustainable development goals and reduction in carbon emissions. Donegal has no rail services and therefore rail does not exist as a viable alternative to the private car at this current time. The feasibility of extending the rail network to the North-West City Region (Letterkenny/Derry/Strabane) from Sligo and Dublin is set out as a growth ambition and a Regional Policy Objective in the Northern and Western Regional Assembly's RSES. Alongside this, this transport plan is being prepared during a time of unprecedented awareness of the need for the protection of both local and global environments and the huge potential sustainable travel has in positively contributing to the global climate change challenge in reducing emissions and private car dependency.

Map 20.3: Ireland's Railway Network
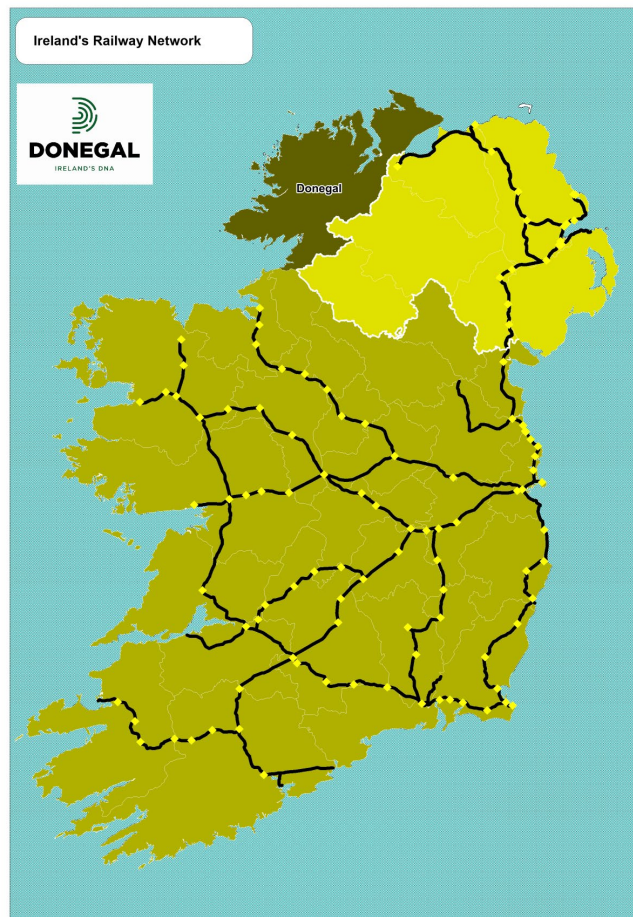
20.5.1 National Strategic Rail Review April 2021.

In April 2021 an Island wide 'Strategic Rail Review' was launched between both governments to consider how the rail network on the island of Ireland can improve sustainable connectivity between the major cities, enhance regional accessibility and support balanced regional development. Donegal County Council and other stakeholders have made submissions to the public consultation process associated with this review. In addition, the Review will consider the feasibility of high- higher speeds on the network and whether there is a potential to increase use of the network for freight. This joint approach and commitment is currently in draft form with government approval on an island wide basis required before publication of the final review.

This process could be transformative for the North-West region in general, and Letterkenny in particular, having regard to Map 20.3 above and the current lack of rail provision in the region when compared with the rest of the country. There is already strong statutory planning policy support for such rail development. The NWRA included objectives supporting such a review for the Western Rail Corridor in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) (refer RPO6.11) and, more specifically, the investigation of the feasibility of extending the rail network to the North-West City Region from Sligo and Dublin (RPO 6.16) in the RSES. Similarly, the CDP 2018-2024 (as varied) also supports the provision of a rail link between Letterkenny and Derry and also onwards to Sligo, and the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor from Athenry to Sligo.

Previous statutory plans for Letterkenny have included policies seeking to preserve the old railway line running parallel with the Four Lane Road from the Dry Arch Roundabout to the Polestar Roundabout along with all other intact railway lines for possible future re-instatement within the national rail network. A review of this approach for this Plan, however, identified that such an approach was no longer justifiable as large sections of the historic Letterkenny-Strabane and Letterkenny-Derry have been compromised by development within the Letterkenny Plan area boundary. Whilst the Council recognizes the social economic and environmental opportunities associated with the reintroduction of rail services within and to and from the county, it is considered appropriate to include the following objective and policies.

20.6 Rail Objective and Policies

LTP-PT-O-5: To support the provision of rail links between Letterkenny and Derry, and Letterkenny to Sligo.

LTP- PT- P-2: It is a policy of the Council to:

a.   support the provision of a Rail link between Letterkenny and Derry and Letterkenny to Sligo; and to support the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor from Athenry to Sligo, thereby completing the All Ireland rail network;

b.   not protect the abandoned historic railways corridors within the Letterkenny Plan area boundary for strategic infrastructure provision (such as rail/road/greenway projects) or for recreational development.

ACTION: Pursuant to the outcomes of the All-Island Strategic Rail Review, Donegal County Council, in collaboration with strategic partners, will seek to identify an appropriate location for a Letterkenny rail hub.

Chapter 21 - Town Centre Transport Strategy

21.1 Key Issues

This Chapter of the Local Transport Plan focuses on the key transportation interventions proposed as part of the broader suite of measures to achieve the ultimate aim that Letterkenny Town Centre will be transformed from a car-dominated and disconnected centre to one that presents a more attractive and safer environment for all users, inclusive of those who wish to live, work, do business in, or visit the town.

The key factors that have influenced the Strategy include:
- The historical transport planning approach favouring the car over other modes of transport;
- The impact of strategic traffic on the town centre;
- Inadequate public transport services and facilities;
- Inadequate active travel and public transport connections between the various sub-areas of the centre; and
- Under-provision of public realm and parks.

Whilst all of these issues are interlinked, strategic traffic issues are addressed in Chapter 22: 'Strategic Roads Strategy', and the legacy urban design issues are addressed in Chapter 9: 'Town Centre Strategy'. Indeed, Chapter 9 contains a broad strategy to guide future development in the Centre in general.

21.2 Active Travel

Proposed Interventions

This Strategy incorporates active travel proposals for the town centre contained within the LK 2040 Regeneration Strategy's - 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan' http://www.letterkenny2040.ie. As noted in that document, these proposals are drawn from both Regeneration Strategy 'Vision' and work to develop this Local Transport Plan. This enabled a process of coordination and prioritisation to take place, after which detailed stakeholder engagement, landowner consents (where necessary), detailed planning and design can take place as each project is taken forward.
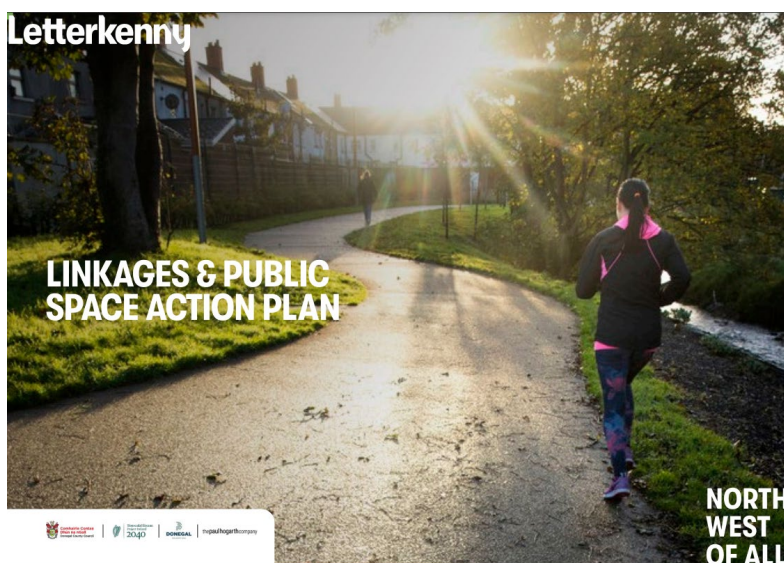
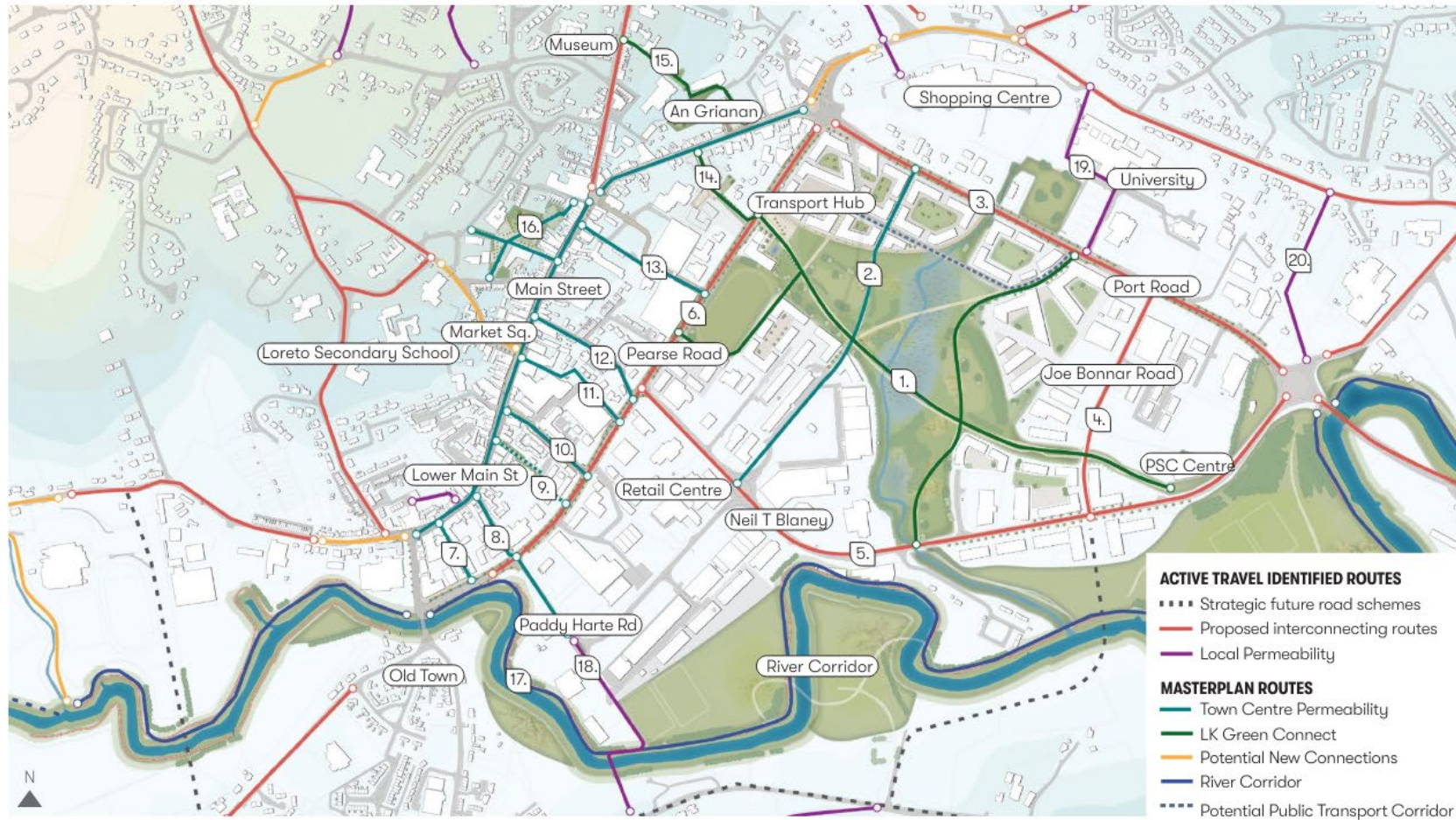The projects are listed in Table 21.1 and identified on Map 21.1 below.

Table 21.1: Town Centre Linkages

NO.	NAME	DESCRIPTION	STRATEGIC PRIORITY
1	LK Green Connect	Safe walking and cycling route connecting Pearse Rd, the retail parks, ATU and the Public Service Centre.	x
2	Port Road retail area	Connection from Port Road- LK Green Connect onwards to the Retail area and junction with Neil T. Blaney Rd and Paddy Harte Rd.	
3	Port Road	Improve existing infrastructure along Port rd. Reallocate carriageway space to create dedicated wider walking & cycle lanes and public realm improvements.	x
4	Joe Bonnar Rd	Connection linking Port Road to Neil T. Blaney Road.	
5	Neil T Blaney Rd	Improve existing environment for walking and cycling infrastructure, connecting to both Port and Pearse roads creating a continuous circuit.	x
6	Pearse Road	Improve existing infrastructure along Pearse rd. Reallocation of carriageway space to create dedicated, wider walking and cycle lanes and public realm improvements.	x
7	Lw Main St – Pearse Rd – Apartment connection	Improve existing connection linking Lower Main Street with Pearse road creating a safe and accessible route.	
8	Larkins Lane	Public realm improvements to strengthen connection between Lower Main Street and Pearse Road.	x
9	Lower Main St -Pearse Rd.	Potential vehicle free walking and cycling route connecting Lower Main St and Pearse Road.	
10	St Oliver Plunkett Rd	Improve existing environment for walking and cycling infrastructure connecting from Lower Main Street to Pearse Road.	
11	Courtyard Shopping Centre connection	Improve existing connection linking Main Street with Pearse Road creating a safe and accessible route.	
12	Rosemount Lane	Public realm improvements to strengthen connection between Main Street and Pearse Road.	x
13	Kinnear Lane	Public realm improvements to strengthen connection between Main Street and Pearse Road	
14	LK Green Connect – ESB Site.	Safe walking and cycling route connecting Pearse Road to Port Road through the former ESB lands.	x
15	LK Green Connect – Cultural Connection.	Safe walking and cycling route connecting Donegal County |Museum on High Road, through the town's cultural destinations at the regional Cultural centre and An Grianan Theatre.	x

NO.	NAME	DESCRIPTION	STRATEGIC PRIORITY
16	Cathedral Quarter Park	Safe walking and cycling routes connecting Church Lane, Main Street, Speers Lane and Ard O Donnell.	
17	River Swilly Greenway	Safe walking and cycling route connecting along The River Swilly with several access points linking into the Town Centre.	x
18	Paddy Harte Rd to River Swilly	Improve existing environment for walking and cycling infrastructure, connecting Pearse Road to the River Swilly Greenway.	
19	University-Port Rd-Ramelton Rd.	Link from Ramelton Road through ATU to Port Road.	x
20	Port Roundabout - Ramelton Rd.	Link from Port Roundabout to Ramelton Road.	
21	Port Road -Main St-Station Roundabout.	Improve existing environment for walking and cycling infrastructure with crossing linking Lk Green Connect between the former ESB site and cultural connection. (Also linked to potential redesign of Station roundabout reference in Design concept for project B2, Port Road).	x
22	Main Street	Improve existing environment for walking and cycling infrastructure.	

Map 21.1: Town Centre Active Travel Measures (As Identified in the LK2040 Regeneration Strategy's 'Linkages & Public Space Action Plan')

TOWN CENTRE
LINKAGES & DESTINATIONS

Museum — 15.

An Grianan

Shopping Centre

14.

Transport Hub — 3.

16.

13.

Main Street

6.

2.

19. University

Port Road

20.

Market Sq.

Loreto Secondary School

12. Pearse Road

Joe Bonnar Road

11.

1.

10.

4.

Lower Main St

9.

Retail Centre

PSC Centre

8.

Neil T Blaney

7.

5.

ACTIVE TRAVEL IDENTIFIED ROUTES
- ▪▪▪▪ Strategic future road schemes
- —— Proposed interconnecting routes
- —— Local Permeability

MASTERPLAN ROUTES
- —— Town Centre Permeability
- —— LK Green Connect
- —— Potential New Connections
- —— River Corridor
- ▪▪▪▪ Potential Public Transport Corridor

Paddy Harte Rd

18.

River Corridor

Old Town

17.

N

Routes shown are indicative only

21.3 Public Transport

This Plan supports the following key public transport interventions in the town centre:

- the provision of a centrally located, multi-functional Regional Transport Hub that will accommodate public and private services; and
- the expansion of the public bus services serving the town centre (refer to Chapter 20: Public Transport for more background information to initiative being pursued in this regard).

21.4 Town Centre Strategy Objectives and Policies:

LTP-TC-O-1: To deliver a multi-functional, centrally-located regional transport hub serving Letterkenny, County Donegal and the wider region.

LTP-TC-O-2: To create a dynamic, accessible town, anchored by a centrally-located local transport hub, served by a centre and town wide network of multi modal infrastructure providing for connectivity and enabling transitional shift to public transport, walking and cycling.

LTP-TC-O-3: To support the principle, development and implementation of the 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy' and all associated documents and plans including the recommendations listed in the 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan.

Policy LTP-TC-P-1: It is a policy of the Council to support the principle of the following sustainable transport plans and interventions in the Town Centre as identified in the 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy' and this Local Transport Plan:

a. the delivery of the 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan' with particular regard to the Town Centre Linkages as set out in Table 21.1 above; future development proposals will be located/sited/designed in a manner which positively relates to and complements the LK Green Connect project and Donegal County Council shall engage with landowners and ensure that future development proposals will be located/sited/designed in a manner which positively relates to and complements LK Green Connect;
b. the development of a centrally-located Transport Hub/interchange;
c. development of the network of walking and cycling routes and public transport priority measures, inclusive of the preservation of corridors necessary for such purposes connecting to the network of town wide schemes;
d. the re-allocation of road space and crossings for the development of priority pedestrian and cycling corridors;
e. the re-allocation of road corridors and crossings for the development of bus priority measures.

Policy LTP-TC-P-2: It is a policy of the council to:
a. support the development of the public realm /active travel routes within the Town Centre core as identified in the Land Use Zoning Map; and
b. support the development of the Swilly Way as provided for within the Letterkenny Plan Land Use zoning map.

Chapter 22: Strategic Roads Strategy

22.1 Background

Chapter 16: 'Key Issues and Underlying Factors' identifies the context for this Strategic Roads Strategy, notably the chronic inadequacies of key strategic road arteries and junctions, and the debilitating impact both on the capacity of these roads to fulfil their primary function of conveying strategic traffic in a safe and efficient manner, and on the functioning of the town due to regular congestion events and resulting delays. To address these critical issues, Donegal County Council, in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Department of Transport, has identified and prioritised a number of major projects to resolve the challenges presented by the inadequacies of the N56/Four Lane Road and N56/R950 (Ramelton) Road Corridor and associated junctions, namely:

1. Section 2 of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (TEN-T PRIPD);

2. The Southern Network Project (SNP);

3. Four Lane Road Safety Improvement Project (designed primarily as a road safety scheme but will also provide some level of improvement in traffic movement and active travel infrastructure provision) and

4. The Polestar Roundabout Project (inclusive of improvements along the adjacent section of the N56/Ramelton Road extending to the Knocknamona roundabout).Map 22.1 - Strategic Network Projects.

Map 22.1: Strategic Measures Being Developed To Address Existing and Projected Strategic Demand

(insert image)

The TEN-T project is comprised of 3 sub-sections, including a Letterkenny section (other two sections address: a. Ballybofey/Stranorlar; and b. Manorcunningham Roundabout to Lifford). The Letterkenny section includes a crucial second crossing of the River Swilly and will enable traffic travelling to and from the north of the County to decouple from town centre-bound traffic and west-of-the-County traffic, and avoid the edge of the town centre. The SNP will perform a similar function for traffic travelling to and from the west of the County.

Preliminary designs for both above-noted major projects include dedicated infrastructure for safe walking and cycling and will also consider how alternative public transport services could be provided for these key arterial corridors. 'Park and Share' and 'Park and Cycle' facilities in addition to facilities for public and private bus pick up and drop off form a key aspect of these schemes. In combination all measures will support the introduction of alternative options to the private car. This not only supports the operation of the strategic routes themselves but in addition and in the round will support the long-term Masterplan ambitions for the town centre. To create a less car dominated town centre and less car dependant town.

22.2 TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project

The N13, N14 and N15 National primary routes form part of the European TEN-T Comprehensive strategic transport network. Enhanced Regional accessibility, including upgrading access to the North

West utilising routes such as the N14 and progressive development of the Atlantic Economic Corridor northwards by upgrading the N15/N13 link, is a National Strategic Outcome of the NPF. Furthermore, the N13/N14/N56 Letterkenny Bypass and Dual Carriageway to Manorcunningham is listed as a priority for investment within the National Development Plan 2018-2027.

Map 22.2 - The TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project Donegal (TEN-T PRIPD)

The TEN-T PRIPD Donegal is a strategic infrastructure project which consists of and prioritises 3 Sections of the TEN-T transport network in Donegal for improvement namely:

- Section 1 - N15/N13 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Urban Region,
- Section 2 - N56/N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham,
- Section 3 - N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 Link.

Specifically, regarding Letterkenny, the project will tackle some of the key transportation issues affecting the existing strategic transport network identified above, namely:

- **Economic:** To improve the efficiency of the transport network by improving journey time and journey time reliability.
- **Safety:** To reduce the frequency and severity of collisions and to improve the overall safety of the national road network.
- **Environment:** To reduce overall air pollution levels near sensitive receptors caused by congestive queuing of vehicles and to reduce overall traffic noise levels near sensitive receptors.
- **Accessibility:** Improve accessibility to/from the North West region and in particular Improve network resilience such as strategic access to Letterkenny where the N56 (Four Lane Road) is a "Lifeline Route" access to Letterkenny and northwest Donegal.
- **Sustainable Transport/Active Travel:** To encourage sustainable/active travel modes by providing walking and cycling infrastructure as an integral part of the project, and segregating

strategic traffic from localized traffic thus easing congestion and freeing up urban road space for sustainable travel modes including bus transport.

The Preferred Route Corridors for the Project were selected by DCC following a detailed and comprehensive 'Option Selection Process' in accordance with Transport Infrastructure Ireland Guidelines (TII). In May, 2021 DCC adopted the Variation to the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2018 in respect of the TEN-T PRIPD which provides the necessary policy and spatial planning framework to facilitate the overall TEN-T PRIPD through the statutory approval process including reserving and protecting the Preferred Route Corridors within the plan. In parallel with the process of adopting said Variation the preparation of the detailed design for the scheme, the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), and the Compulsory Purchase Order documentation for the project continues to be progressed and the project will be the subject of an application to An Bord Pleanala for approval in due course.

Section 2 (N56/N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham) of the TEN-T PRIPD
The Preferred Route Corridor identified for Section 2 of the TEN-T PRIPD affecting Letterkenny includes: a new offline section of the N13 through the townlands of Drumany and Dromore (south of the existing N13 dual carriageway), a new junction with the N13 dual carriageway at Dromore, a new offline section traversing the townlands of Dromore, Bunnagee and Milk Isle (north of the existing N13 dual carriageway) with a new link to the existing Dry Arch roundabout at Bunnagree, a new clear-span 100m strategic crossing of the River Swilly and a new roundabout at the junction of the N56/R245 at Ballyraine on the edge of the town centre.

The Section 2 TEN-T PRIPD preferred route corridor will therefore: provide a second strategic access point to Letterkenny coming from Derry, Belfast, Dublin and Sligo, significantly reduce traffic congestion on the heavily congested N56 from the Dry Arch Roundabout west to the Polestar roundabout, remove a significant volume of traffic from the Polestar roundabout and junction of the N56/R940 Ballyraine road (thereby also reducing air and noise pollution and freeing up road space for sustainable modes of transport), and improve safety.

22.2.1 Active Travel Infrastructure

Active transport infrastructure forms an integral part of the TEN-T Project, and combined cycling and pedestrian facilities are proposed throughout Section 2 of said scheme. In particular, a segregated shared cycleway/footpath is proposed from the southern end of Section 2 of the scheme at Listillian northwards to the new junction with the existing N13 dual carriageway at Dromore all of which are located on the outskirts of the town. This facility will have a significantly improved gradient which with make it a more attractive option for active travel compared with the current scenario. In addition, new cycling/ pedestrian connections are also proposed to the local road infrastructure in this area and St Patrick's Primary School Lurgybrack as part of this element of the scheme.

A shared cycleway/footpath (Non-Motorised User Facility), segregated where possible, is also proposed from the abovementioned new junction at Dromore east to the N13/ N14 junction at Manorcunningham and onward to Lifford creating new active travel opportunities throughout the county.

A segregated shared cycleway/footpath is proposed from the abovementioned junction at Dromore, to a proposed new junction north of the Dry Arch at Bunnagee and across the new strategic bridge crossing of the Swilly to connect with the town's existing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure at the N56/R245 junction at Ballyraine. In addition, shared cycleway/footpath connections are proposed from the new proposed junction at Bunnagee to the existing Dry Arch Roundabout connecting to new proposed facilities to be constructed as part of the N56 Four Lane Road Project.

In combination with the sustainable/active travel infrastructure planned for the Section 3: N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 Link of the TEN-T PRIPD the abovementioned infrastructure would provide for continuous dedicated walking and cycling infrastructure from Lifford to Letterkenny. Furthermore, the abovementioned active travel infrastructure would also connect to the walking and cycling infrastructure approved for the N56 Four Lane Road Safety Improvement Scheme. This provides for new safe and dedicated cycleway and footpaths connections to the southern edge of the town.

22.2.2 TEN-T PRIPD - Policies and Objectives:

LTP-T-O-1 - Should there be any ostensible or apparent conflict between, on the one hand, the Objectives, Policies and/or provisions of the Local Area Plan herein providing for the development of Section 2 of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (TEN-T PRIPD) and, on the other hand, any other Objectives, Policies and/or provisions of the Local Area Plan, those Objectives, Policies and Provisions which provide for the development of the TEN-T PRIPD shall take priority over all or any other provisions of the Local Area Plan and any such other provisions or Objectives shall be read and construed as subservient to and not in any material way contravening so much of the Objectives, Policies and provisions contained within this Plan as provide for the development of the TEN-T PRIPD.

LTP-T-P-1: It is a policy of the Council to support and facilitate the appropriate development, extension and improvement of the TEN-T network within Letterkenny, subject to environmental, safety and other planning considerations. In this regard it is a specific policy of the Council to:

a) Progress and ultimately carry out/implement the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal within Letterkenny as one of critical strategic importance to Donegal subject to the granting of the required statutory approvals for same and the terms and conditions of any such approvals (if granted).

b) Reserve the preferred route corridor for Section 2 of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal within Letterkenny as shown on the Zoning Map for the purposes of the project and the ancillary facilities to service the same and not to permit other development within those corridors where such development may prejudice the carrying out/implementation of the said project.

c) Facilitate any development related to the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal within Letterkenny within lands zoned:
   - TEN-T PRIPD/Established Development.
   - TEN-T PRIPD/General Employment and Commercial.
   - TEN-T PRIPD/Open Space.
   - TEN-T PRIPD/Local Environment.
   - TEN-T PRIPD /Opportunity site.

22.3 N56

The N56 through Letterkenny is a critical multimodal transportation corridor enabling movement of all goods, services and people within and around Letterkenny and is fundamental for compact urban growth, economic development and modal shift within Letterkenny as envisaged under national, regional and local policies. It is the sole primary access to and from Letterkenny for all vital emergency services and the limited network resilience means that any operational issues arising can rapidly result in shutdown and significant disruption to these services and the wider town.

Planning policy in respect to the N56 Letterkenny is to create a safe and attractive multi modal corridor that facilitates active travel along and across the N56 through Letterkenny and to safeguard and maintain the function and operation of the N56 as a Strategic distributor and lifeline route for all transport modes. It is also vital to enable sustainable and appropriate development access. The key policy deliverables with respect to the N56 include provision of new/improved active travel facilities, provision of new crossing facilities, signalisation and rationalisation of existing junctions. This will enable multimodal connectivity along and permeability across the N56 for all road users and will optimise function and efficiency of the urban N56.

Overall new accesses to the N56 Urban will not be allowed except if 'exceptional circumstances' are established in accordance with National Spatial Planning Guidelines. Similarly, any development resulting in intensification of an existing junction(s) must be consistent with the overall strategy for the N56 and for the particular policy for improvement as outlined below.

The existing N56 Letterkenny Urban is a key multimodal transport corridor and can be divided into four distinct sections (see map below) for the identification of future upgrading/interventions to create multi modal options along these distinct stretches of urban national secondary route.

**Map 22.3 N56 Letterkenny Urban Sections**
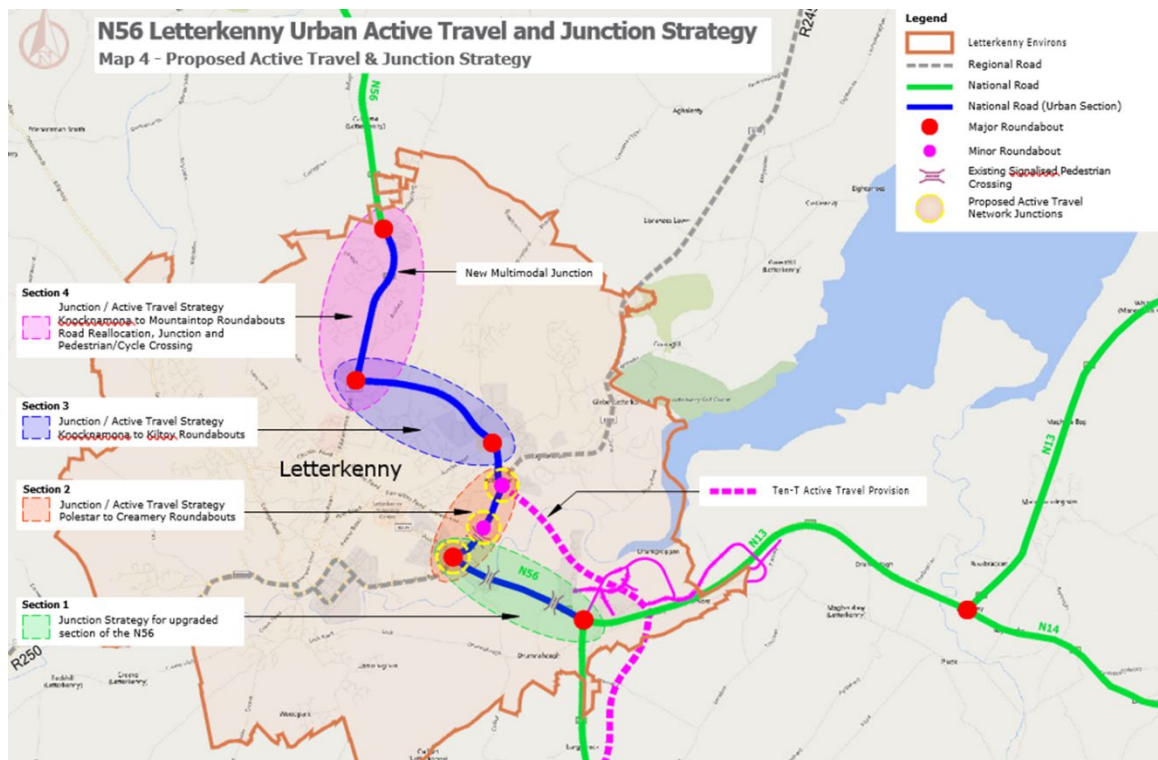
1. N56 Four Lane Road (Dry Arch Roundabout to Polestar Roundabout): DMurs designed upgrades to the existing N56 Four Lane Road were completed mid-2023, reducing speed, full carriageway segregation, removal of all but two right turning junctions and full Active Travel (pedestrian and cycle) facilities on both sides of the road including two signalised crossings.

2. N56 Polestar Roundabout to Creamery Roundabout: is a legacy section of the N56 and has the benefit of Part VIII approval for signalisation and rationalisation of the existing junctions. In addition, it is proposed to provide new and improved Active Travel facilities along and across the N56, including potential road-space re-allocation where feasible, in conjunction with the signalised junctions.

3. N56 Creamery Roundabout to Knocknamona Roundabout (Business Park Road): new walking and cycling facilities are anticipated to be proposed as future improvements along and across this stretch, including primary signalised junctions and rationalisation of existing junctions and accesses to enable permeability across the N56 for non-motorised users and to facilitate improved function and efficiency on the N56. This also includes a reduced speed limit to provide consistency along the N56 and to facilitate junction arrangements.

4. N56 Knocknamona Roundabout to Mountaintop: It is proposed to provide new/improved Active Travel facilities along and across the N56 to improve connectivity and permeability for pedestrians and cyclists. It is also proposed to rationalise existing junctions and accesses by providing new Primary Junctions to improve safety, connectivity, permeability, function and efficiency of this section of the N56 for all road users.

22.3.1 N56 Policies and Objectives:

LTP–T-P-2: It is a policy of the Council to permit the development of lands adjacent to the N56 Four Lane Road by means of access only via the existing local road junctions identified in Fig. 22.1 below or alternatively by a single improved junction to the N56, replacing the existing poorly aligned Cullion Road and junction, subject to the safety and carrying capacity of the National Road being maintained.

Figure 22.1: Four Lane Road Access Strategy
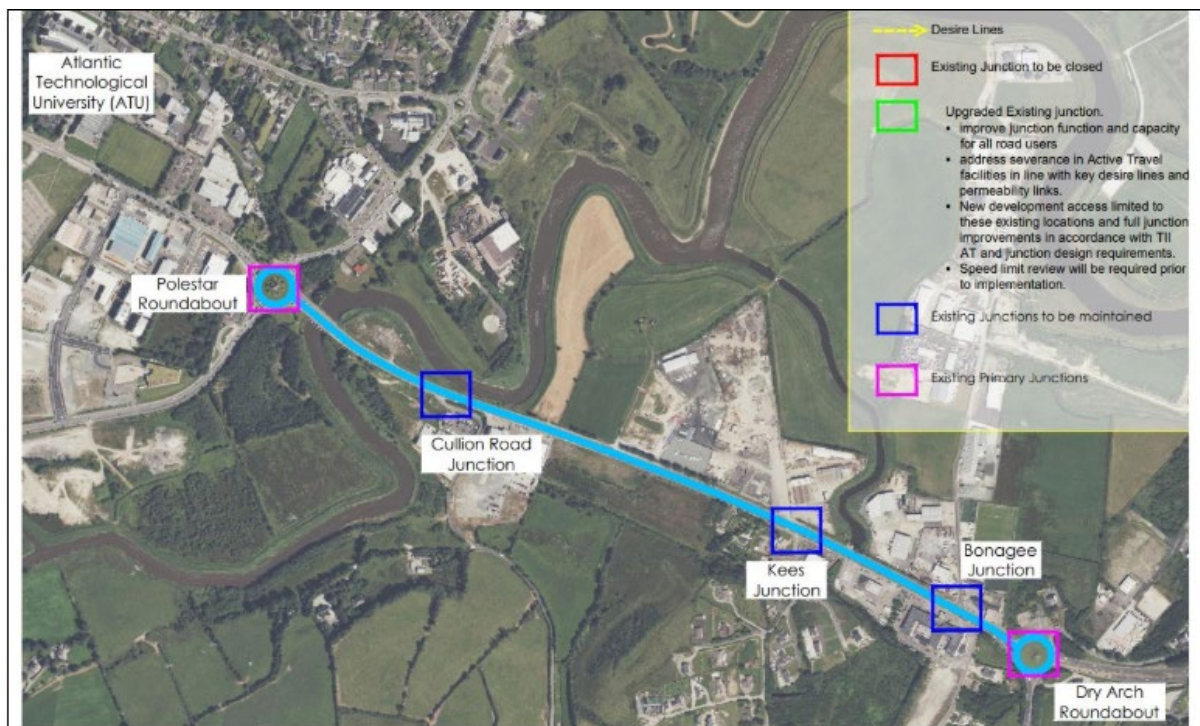
Policy LK- T-P-3: It is a policy of the Council that development proposals requiring access to the N56 Business Park Road shall only be permitted where such proposals are consistent with the Council's strategy to:

a.   Provide new/improved active travel facilities along and across the N56;

b.   Upgrade and rationalise the junctions identified in Fig. 22.2 below to enable permeability across the N56 for non-motorised users and to facilitate improved function and efficiency on the N56; and

c.   Implement a reduced speed limit to provide consistency along the N56 and to facilitate junction arrangements.

Figure 22.2: Business Park Road Access Strategy
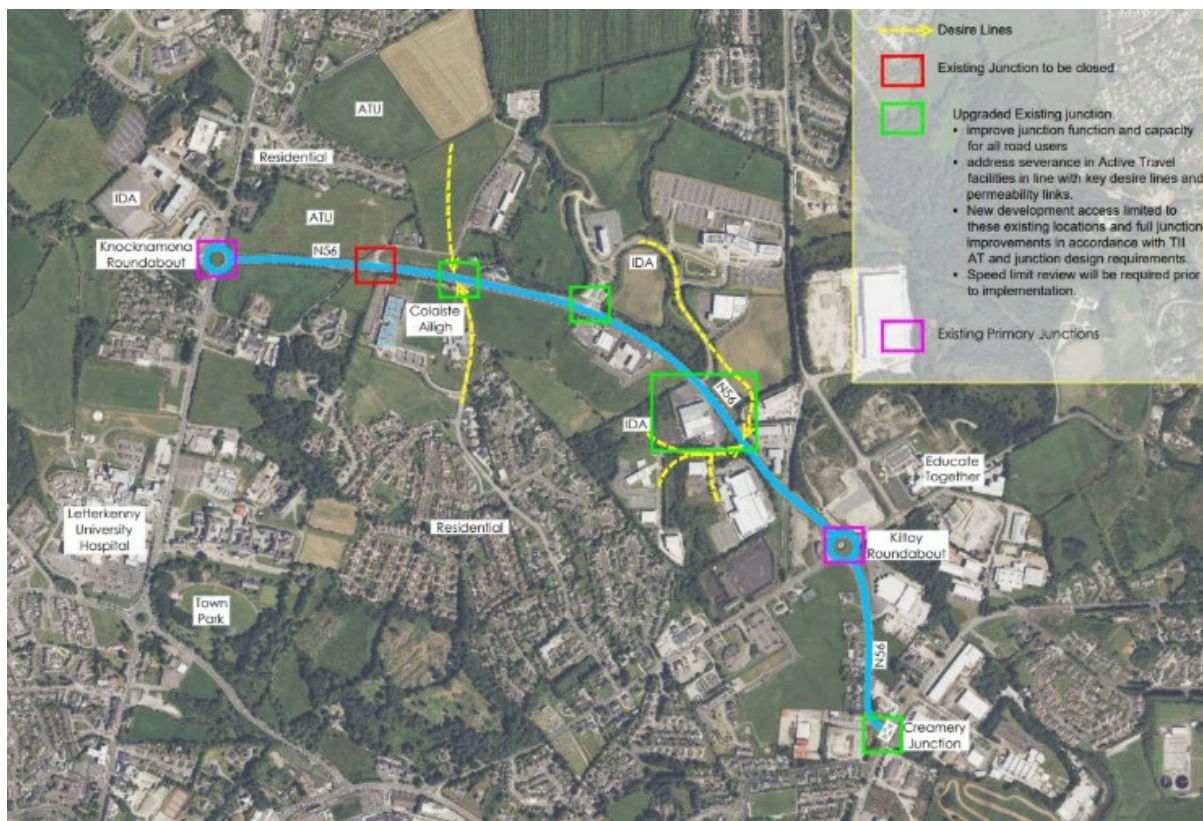
Policy LK-T-P-4: It is a policy of the Council to signalise and rationalise the existing junctions, from the Polestar to the Creamery roundabout and to provide new and improved Active Travel facilities along and across the N56, including potential road-space re-allocation where feasible, in conjunction with the signalised junctions.

Policy LK-T-P-5: It is a policy of the Council to:

a. provide new/improved Active Travel facilities along and across the N56 from the N56 Knocknamona Roundabout extending to the Mountain Top, to improve connectivity and permeability for pedestrians and cyclists.

b. to rationalise existing junctions and accesses by providing new Primary Junctions to improve safety, connectivity, permeability, function and efficiency of this section of the N56 for all road users.
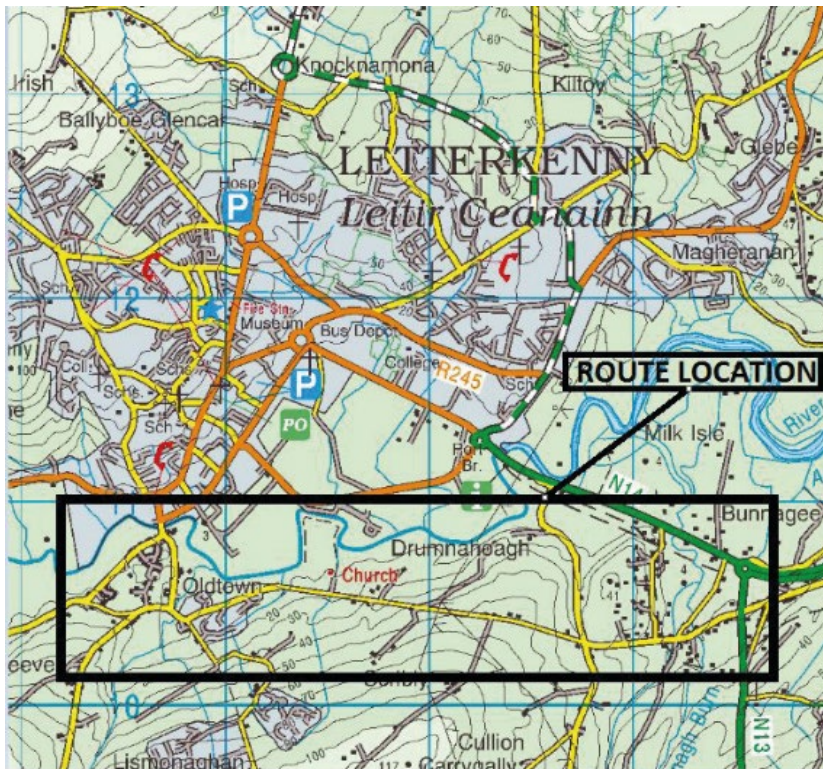
22.4 Southern Network Project

The Southern Network Project (SNP) (previously referred to as the Southern Relief Road) has been conceived as a strategic transportation corridor development project commencing on the N13/N14 and traversing in a westerly direction. The scheme terminates adjacent to the Ballymacool roundabout located to the west of the town with a proposed connection onwards to the Rock Hill Road and the west of the county. The SNP is a combination of both a comprehensive upgrade of the main road network in the south of the town, and the provision of significant new active travel facilities to complement and to form part of the wider network of active travel facilities proposed in this Plan.

The project comprises online widening (Leck Road and Rockhill Road), new road construction and new river crossings.

Map 22.3 - Southern Network Project Route Location

Map 22.4 - Southern Network Project/Relationship with TEN-T and Four Lane Projects

22.4.1 Background/Existing Policy Support

The SNP is already supported at regional and county planning policy levels. The RSES RPO 3.7.30 supports both the TEN-T project and the Southern Network Project as follows:

- RSES RPO 3.7.30: 'To deliver the TEN-T priority route improvement Donegal and Letterkenny by 2028, including the N-56 Link, and also progress the Southern Relief Road (Leck Road), the N-14 Manorcunningham – Lifford. and N-13 Letterkenny - Ballybofey.'

- The SNP is also identified in Fig. 33: 'Letterkenny Core Projects' and Fig. 35: 'Strategic Road Schemes'.

- County Donegal Development Plan, 2018-2024 lists in Table 5.1B: 'Proposed Transport Improvement Projects' and provides support in Objective T-O-7: 'To protect the corridors and routes and acquire the lands necessary for transportation improvement projects as identified in Table 5.1B'.

The Southern Network Project (SNP) has been supported in policy since the project was identified and supported with an evidence basis in the ILUTS Report, 2009. The SNP has been identified as an important strategic route for the town to intercept traffic prior to approach to the heavily saturated Port Bridge Roundabout and Oldtown junctions and thereby to provide an effective means of transferring westbound traffic from the east.

22.4.2 Key Objectives/Anticipated Benefits:

The key objectives of the project are as follows:

- To minimise town centre congestion with the redistribution of west bound traffic by providing an alternative route.

- To increase capacity of the local road network and to reduce congestion in the town centre and on the approaches to the town centre thus maximising the capacity of the town centre and the extended town centre for shoppers, visitors, local residents, customers and businesses creating a more favourable environment.

- Provision of new and/or improved relief roads to ensure the continued effective operation of the strategic road network.

- Provision of access to key development lands to the south of the town via new link roads to assist in reshaping Letterkenny and providing opportunity for residential/ suburb development within walk/cycling distance of the town centre and amenities in accordance with the compact growth strategy of this Plan.

- To encourage and promote modal shift and remove traffic in the urban environment and promote a more user-friendly town centre with the provision of safe and continuous pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities.

- Improve road safety to the south of Letterkenny for all road users and current and future residents.

Table 22.1 – Anticipated Benefits of Southern Network Project

Economy	• Improving average journey times. • Improve economic performance and reduce transport costs. • Improve urban congestion
Safety	• To reduce the severity of collisions along the national road network; • To improve safety for all road users including pedestrians and cyclists along both the national road network and on the surrounding road network; • To support the RSA Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030;
Environment	• To improve the environment in terms of air quality and noise levels by improving the existing road alignment. • To improve the town centre environment through: removal or reassignment of strategic traffic to the subject road; and by removal of traffic to park and stride facilities. • To promote Modal Shift. • To avoid adverse impacts on the internationally important European Site of Lough Swilly Special Area of Conservation (002287) & Lough Swilly Special Protection Area (004075).
Accessibility and Social Inclusion:	• To improve accessibility to key facilities, such as employment, education, transport, and healthcare for all road users, but in particular vulnerable groups; • To improve accessibility and reduce severance and in turn support social and economic development within this strategically located hinterland; and • To support the accessibility and social inclusion objectives of national, regional and local planning policy.
Integration	• To support initiatives to bring investment into the Northern & Western Region; • In the case of roads provide access to poorly served regions, for large scale employment proposals, to complete missing links and to address critical safety issues; and • Support identified national and regional spatial planning priorities
Active Travel:	• To improve ambient conditions and thereby encourage increased physical activity; and • To improve safety for all road users, in particular cyclists and pedestrians, along the L1114, thereby encouraging increased physical activity.

22.5 Additional Strategic Roads Schemes

Successive Donegal Councils have given policy support to the development of a Northern Network Project (previously referred to as the 'Northern Relief Road') and a Western Network Project (previously referred to as the 'Western Relief Road') to address challenges on the northern and western sides of the town. Support for these projects is also contained in the RSES. The proposals are retained, therefore, in this Plan inclusive of the identification of indicative routes on the Land Use Zoning Map and active travel maps, and their inclusion in relevant policies below, given the huge potential they offer for the provision of multi-modal travel providing further connectivity to the existing network modes. Whilst the Western network project is unlikely to be realized in the long term, the horizon for the development of the Northern Network Project is anticipated in the short to medium term in tandem with anticipated private development in the area.

22.5.1 Mountain Top Road Considerations

Donegal County Council acknowledges ongoing challenges around congestion issues on the Mountain Top Road/N56. The undernoted Action contains a commitment of the Council to investigate the feasibility of a suggested measure to help alleviate these issues.

ACTION: Donegal County Council will investigate the feasibility and cost/benefits of providing a relief road between the Mountain Top Roundabout and Killylastin.

22.6 General Strategic Roads Objective and Policies

LTP-T- O-2: To develop the Strategic Roads programme for Letterkenny.

LTP-T-P-5: It is a policy of the council to:

a. Support and facilitate the appropriate development, extension and improvement of Letterkenny's transport network, including the strategic roads projects identified in Table 22.2 below;
b. Not to permit development that would prejudice the implementation of a strategic roads project identified in Table 22.2.
c. Protect the corridors and routes and acquire the lands necessary for new roads and road improvement projects as identified in Table 22.2 below.

LTP-T-P-6: It is a policy of the council to:

a. Address the inadequate strategic road network serving the town of Letterkenny so as to alleviate current congestion to and from and within the town.
b. Provide for and support the removal of non-strategic traffic from the town through support for the provision of strategic roads infrastructure projects.
c. Manage future traffic interventions to ensure reprioritizing from the private car to sustainable modes so as to create a safer and more comfortable environment for pedestrians cyclists and public transport.
d. Protect the corridors and routes and acquire the lands necessary for new roads and road improvement projects as identified in Table 22.2.

Table 22.2 - Strategic Roads Projects

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project (Section 2)
Southern Network Project
Northern Network Project
Western Network Project
Urban Road Improvement Projects