

# VISION

**The vision for Naas promoted in the framework is of a sustainable and efficient town, with a balanced range of functions, facilities and amenities, building on its present strengths and meeting the needs of its people.**

The vision is expanded on in the preferred framework, outlined below.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Naas Integrated Development Framework for Land Use and Transportation is to provide a broad vision for the future development of Naas.

The plan establishes a framework that:

- integrates existing and future land uses, including housing, shopping, employment activities and amenities;
- incorporates the principles of sustainability;
- provides the basis for the close integration of development with sustainable transportation modes: walking, cycling and public transport; and
- places a strong emphasis on quality of life issues.

The plan takes a medium to longer-term view, up to 2016.

The plan is not intended to be a detailed 'masterplan' and will be implemented through the review of the Development Plans for Naas and its environs, where appropriate through Local Area Plans, and through actions and measures for the improvement of transportation and the further development of infrastructure and amenities.

Particular regard has been given to the designation of Naas, together with Newbridge and Kilcullen, as a Primary Development Centre under the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and the DTO Strategy 2000-2016 'A Platform for Change'.

The framework plan was prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff, in association with Brady Shipman Martin and Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd.

An extensive consultation process with elected representatives, stakeholders and the public was undertaken as part of the preparation of the plan and this provided valuable information and viewpoints that informed the direction of the preferred framework.



***A vision and framework for Naas.***



***Provides the basis for future Development Plans.***

## NAAS TODAY

The population of Naas increased from 14,074 in 1996 to 18,312 in 2002, whilst almost 3,000 additional persons live in other parts of the study area including Sallins, Two-Mile House, Caragh and Johnstown. The 30% increase in population between 1996 and 2002 is very large, but the growth in the number of households is even greater at almost 50%. This reflects a rapid decline in average household size.

Housing development in Naas, in common with many other towns within the Dublin commuter belt, has been at relatively low densities. Over the past 30 years, the town has expanded in a series of layers predominantly to the north-east and south-east of the centre. Substantial areas of land close to the town centre remain undeveloped, especially to the north-west of the canal, and these provide an alternative to development at the periphery of the town.

Newer industrial and office activities have developed over the past 15 years, mainly in the Monread area and to the east of the town centre, whilst the commencement of Millennium Park (which covers 280 acres) has added a very significant new land use to the town.

Sports and recreational activities are located throughout the town with new developments tending to be further from the centre. There is a proposal to relocate some existing facilities. In overall terms, Naas is well served for green space and has good accessibility to the Curragh, the Wicklow Mountains and other amenities. However, Naas currently lacks a town park commensurate with its size, which would serve as a major recreational focus point.



***Development opportunities are available relatively close to the town centre***

## CURRENT ISSUES

The sprawl of housing estates that has characterised the development of towns such as Naas is increasingly seen as unsustainable and unacceptable for reasons that include:

- levels of land take;
- distance from the town centre;
- difficulties of integration; and
- heavy reliance on private car usage.

This form of development places pressure on the cohesion and integrity of Naas as an attractive town in which to live and promotes the use of unsustainable transportation modes. In response to these issues, current planning practice is to seek for higher development densities, improved integration between development and transportation and better design, so as to create attractive urban living conditions providing a good quality of life.



***Need to create attractive living conditions and good quality of life.***

This approach results in the minimisation of travel, fewer atmospheric emissions, greater fuel efficiency and a safer living environment for residents. It also accords with the Strategic Planning Guidelines, which have been adopted as Government Policy. These issues will inevitably become increasingly important in the future development and growth of Naas.

Most new industrial and commercial developments in Naas are located on the outskirts of the town and rely almost entirely on car usage for accessibility. This is likely to be the case for some time and presents challenges in relation to providing access by walking, cycling and public transport.

At present, traffic in Naas is problematical, especially at some key junctions in peak periods. Naas is one of the best bypassed towns in the country (M7 and M9), and consequently most traffic in the town is locally generated or arises from activities in the town. Traffic surveys have shown that travelling to work by car, and children being taken to and from school by car, exacerbate congestion. Transferring as many as possible of these trips to walking, cycling and on buses will reduce traffic congestion significantly, as well as contributing to improving the environment.



***High levels of private car use***



***Good potential to address traffic issues***

## OBJECTIVES

The primary and over-riding objectives of the framework plan are based on the principles of sustainable development and are:

- To promote and encourage the development and growth of Naas in line with the principles of sustainable development.
- To promote an appropriate balance of employment, residential and service facilities (schools, shopping, community facilities etc) and land uses that will increase the self-sufficiency of the town and support its role as a key part of a designated Primary Development Centre in the Greater Dublin Area.

Other objectives include:

- to incorporate new civic, commercial, shopping, cultural and community facilities within an expanded town centre
- to promote well-located local/neighbourhood centres, containing commercial, community and educational facilities, integrated with and supporting new and existing residential development and public transport
- to focus new employment to locations that reduce the demand for travel and be appropriate in density and type of activity to its location
- to encourage and promote diversity and quality in new residential developments at higher densities appropriate to their location within the town and relative to public transport



- to achieve high quality in the design and layout of new developments and neighbourhoods
- to protect and enhance the key natural and manmade assets of Naas, including the character of the town and the landscape
- to promote the provision of high quality, safe and convenient recreational facilities and public open spaces integrated, where appropriate, with walking and cycling
- to enhance the permeability of the town through the identification and promotion of opportunities for walking and cycling in and between existing and future development
- to promote and maximise the use of public transport for trips external to the town
- to promote and maximise the use of sustainable transportation modes with a consequent reduction in the need to travel by car



## ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS

Five alternative land use and transportation scenarios for the future of Naas were developed and assessed during the course of the study. In developing the scenarios, particular regard was given to the concept of environmental sustainability and the principles adopted by the Government in the National Sustainable Development Strategy.

The following sustainability considerations are of particular importance:

- seeking a meaningful reduction in the growth in demand for transport
- ensuring that land use and transportation planning are intimately integrated and that future land use proposals incorporate appropriate transport measures
- achieving a clearer demarcation between urban and rural land uses than at present
- increasing emphasis on sustainable transportation alternatives to the private car

The scenarios for 2016 include the following common elements:

- an expanded population of 30,000
- 4,800 additional houses
- the creation of 8,000 jobs
- maximum use of the canal corridor as a valuable public leisure and recreational facility



## DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

|  | A<br>Unrestrained   | B<br>Dispersed  | C<br>Balanced employment  | D<br>High density in NW sector   | E<br>High density around town centre   |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Sector of town that is the focus of development</b> | Widespread  | Predominantly north west  | Predominantly south and north west  | Predominantly north west   | Predominantly north west   |
| <b>Residential densities</b>                           | Low   | Medium  | Medium  | High   | High   |
| <b>Land area requirement</b>                           | High  | Medium  | Medium  | Low  | Low  |
| <b>Location of new employment</b>                      | Predominantly Millennium Park with significant levels in Pipers Hill and in edge of town developments | Predominantly Millennium Park with significant levels in Pipers Hill and in expanded town centre            | Split evenly between Millennium Park and Pipers Hill with small level in expanded town centre | Predominantly in Millennium Park with significant levels in small levels in Pipers Hill and Local Centres. | Split evenly between Millennium Park and town centre with small levels in Pipers Hill          |
| <b>Expanded town centre</b>                            | Limited to within existing town centre  | Primarily to the west of the canal  | Primarily to the south – east   | Primarily to the west of the canal   | Primarily to the west of the canal   |
| <b>Transport corridor</b>                              | Limited   | To northwest connecting Sallins station with town centre and the hospital                                   | To northwest connecting Sallins station with town centre and Pipers Hill                      | To northwest connecting Sallins station with town centre and the hospital                                  | To northwest connecting Sallins station with town centre and the hospital                      |
| <b>Strategic and public open space</b>                 | Amenity area along and next to canal with ad hoc open space on edge of development                    | Amenity area along and next to canal with planned and linked high quality open space within new development | Amenity area along and next to canal. New public open space not linked to canal amenity area. | Amenity area along and next to canal and linked high quality open space within new development             | Amenity area along and next to canal and linked high quality open space within new development |

The scenarios were evaluated and compared on transportation, sustainability, practicality and quality of life grounds and the conclusions reached may be summarised as:

- Scenario A does not provide a sustainable transport solution as it reinforces dependency on the private car. Due to the dispersed development, public transport will not be economically viable. Overall quality of life in the long term is lower than the other scenarios and Scenario A is therefore not recommended
- increased densities will be the norm in all future urban developments, in response to sustainability issues and government policy. Consequently, the choice is not between high density near the centre and low density on the periphery, but rather between different locations at comparable density levels
- the economic viability of public transport is less certain for Scenario C than for Scenarios B, D and E, because development is more dispersed. Scenarios D and E are the best in this regard
- Scenarios B, D and E allow for significantly improved access to the rail station at Sallins
- higher density development, promoted particularly in Scenarios D and E, requires considerably smaller areas of land and consolidates development so walking, cycling and travel by bus are feasible
- the land take requirement associated with higher densities allows for consideration of alternative uses, such as a public park, without unduly extending the town envelope
- Scenario D, although similar in many ways to Scenario B, has a lower land requirement, incorporates a public transport corridor from the hospital through the town centre and Millennium Park to Sallins railway station, and envisages an expanded town centre with an additional 1,250 jobs
- Scenario E differs from Scenario D only in relation to the location of future jobs. Given that much future employment will probably arise from inward investment, it is more likely in the medium term that new employment will be located in purpose-built business park settings, such as Millennium Park. Whilst Scenario E represents a more ideal situation from a sustainability point of view, it is less likely to be achieved than scenario D



From the above, it is recommended that the preferred framework for future land use and transportation in Naas in the medium to longer term be based on a combination of Scenarios D and E.

A full examination of the assessment is given in the main report and traffic modelling details with supporting documentation are included in the Technical Appendices to the report.

## PREFERRED FRAMEWORK

The preferred framework plan takes into account the needs of people to travel from their homes to places of work, to schools, to shops and to other services and facilities. It locates housing and other land uses in such a way that, as far as possible, travel is reduced to a minimum. The preferred framework also promotes sustainable modes of travel.

The framework combines improvements to the location, scale, form and character of future development with targeted improvements to existing built-up areas. It accommodates higher densities of development, promotes a good demarcation between urban and rural areas, together with high standards of amenity, safety and convenience.

The plan is based on developing an expanded town centre, together with a public transport corridor extending from The hospital area through the centre to Millennium Park and Sallins Station. Employment will be concentrated in the town centre and at Millennium Park. New walking and cycling routes will connect residential areas with neighbourhood centres, the town centre and employment areas.

### **Naas Town Centre**

The town centre will remain as the heart of the community and the principal focus for activity. A vibrant centre will encourage people to live, work, shop and enjoy recreation in Naas.

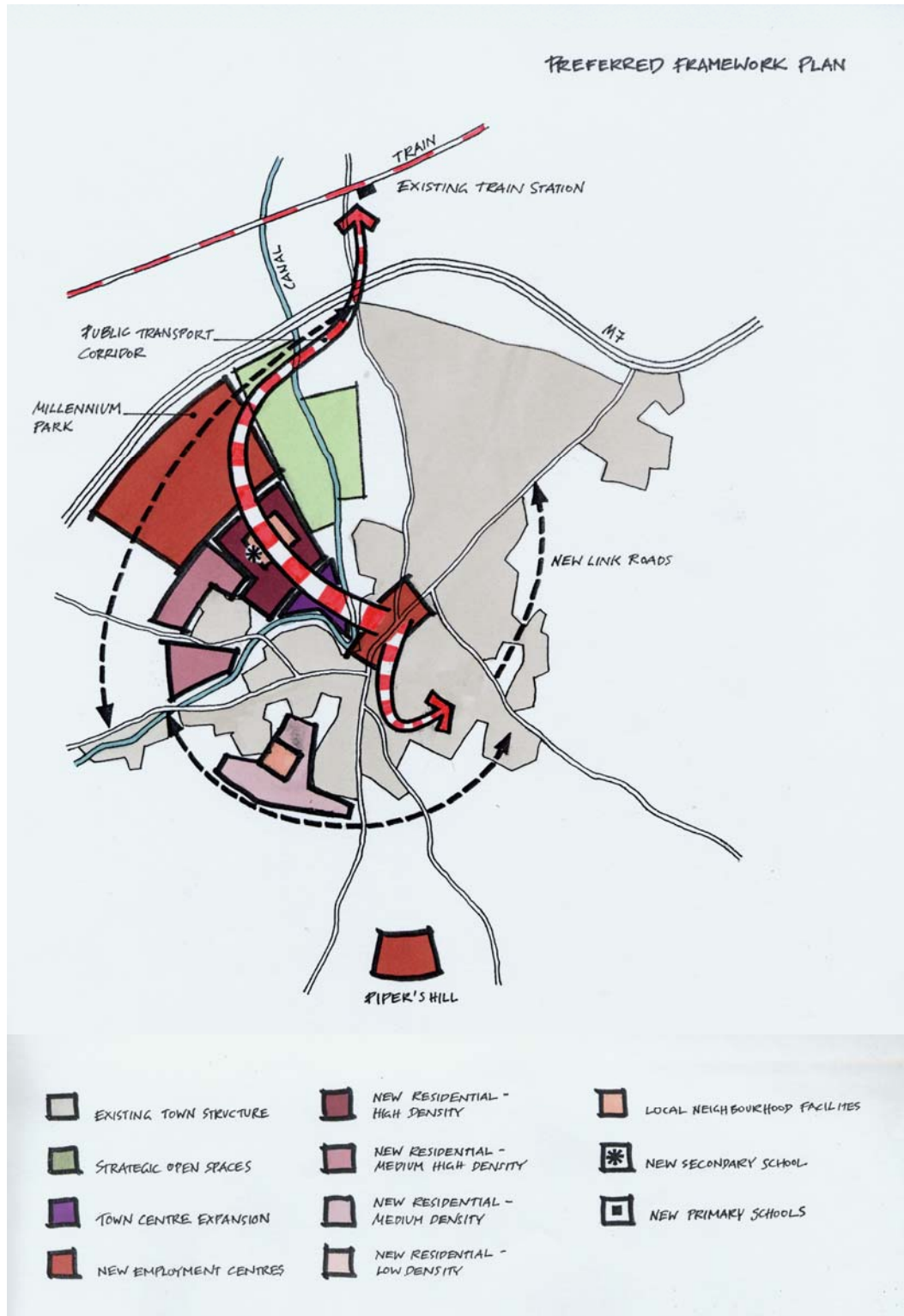
The existing centre is attractive with a strong identity and sense of place, but its expansion is constrained by limited availability of suitable land and by traffic congestion.

The lands west of the canal provide a unique opportunity to extend the town centre through the creation of suitable pedestrian, cycling and public transport links across the waterway, whilst controlling the general movement of vehicles. This, together with the implementation of the inner relief road proposals, will allow for the creation of a significant pedestrian priority zone in the existing centre. The result will be a much extended and very attractive town centre with a mix of uses, including residential, and with capacity to accommodate the additional shopping, commercial and other uses arising from the expansion of the town. To achieve this:

- *new shopping development should be located within the existing or new expanded town centre*



- new town centre development to include a mix of shopping, commercial, community and residential uses in appropriate higher density development around pedestrian friendly streets that are suitably landscaped
- new expanded town centre to have strong physical and functional links with the existing town centre





### **Residential Areas**

Approximately 4,800 new homes will be required over the period of the framework plan. In making provision for these, the quality of life provided for residents is important. The mix of dwellings, their design and layout, density, form, materials and colour will influence the quality of the residential environment.

The provision of a mix of house types and size will help create a balanced community, provide choice, allow achievement of appropriate densities (at suitable locations) and create visual variety and interest. The relationship to public transport and to walking and cycling routes will be important. So:

- *new residential developments should include a mixture of different types of houses, apartments and town houses*
- *appropriate higher residential densities should be promoted close to public transport, employment areas and the town centre*
- *new residential developments should use different building heights, frontages and forms to help create variety and interest in the layout thereby enhancing its visual character*
- *new residential developments should be designed to allow maximum permeability for the pedestrian and cyclist*
- *new residential developments should be designed to support and facilitate new and future bus routes*

### **Education and Community Facilities**

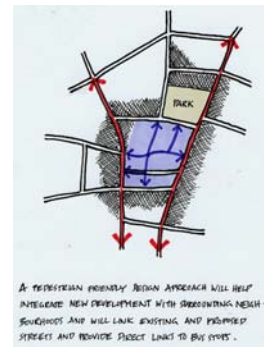
New schools, at both primary and post-primary level, will need to be provided within the north-west sector to serve the new population. Education and community facilities generate high levels of traffic movements and should, where possible, be developed adjacent to or integrated with the development of future local neighbourhood centres with their associated good transport links.

Facilities serving a wider catchment, such as libraries, are best located in the town centre. Future planning should ensure:

- *new education and community facilities are be located in areas of maximum accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling routes*
- *community / civic buildings and uses are located within the expanded town centre*

### **Open Space and Recreation**

Open space provides for two functions: routes for movement and leisure amenity. Additional open space in Naas, preferably located within easy walking distance of residential areas, will enhance the quality and sustainability of the residential environment and contribute to people's health, well-being and quality of life. To deliver this:



- *space for children's play, nature conservation and sports should be within walking distance of residential areas*
- *the area of public open space required as part of any development may be around 10% of the site area or greater*
- *design of open spaces should incorporate the need for safety and informal surveillance*
- *streets will be the focus of design within the town centre and around the public transport corridor*
- *routes for movement should be designed to be attractive and safe for people to use*
- *new residential layouts should make adequate provision for private open space in the form of gardens, patios, balconies or terraces for all dwellings*

### **Utilities**

Commensurate improvement and development of water supply, sewer and surface water infrastructure, as well as the provision of adequate waste re-cycling and disposal facilities, energy supply and telecommunications must match the expansion and development of Naas. Future development should:

- *provide for future capacity within the development framework*

### **Sustainable travel**

An important objective of sustainable development is to secure a reduction in the need to travel, especially by private car, and to promote a greater use of alternative modes of travel, including walking, cycling and public transport. This can be achieved by locating everyday destinations, such as the workplace, shops, schools and leisure facilities close together, by designing in alternative modes at the earliest stages of development and by concentrating land uses around public transport routes at appropriate higher densities.

The travel modes need to be affective, affordable, accessible, safe and environmentally sound, with adequate carrying capacity. Future development should:

- *ensure that sustainable transport is integrated into the development proposals*
- *increase accessibility through development densities*

### **Walking and Cycling Networks**

Naas is of an appropriate size to be attractive for walking and cycling and existing routes are relatively direct. The network of paths and cycleways needs to be extended, improved and made more attractive. Future development should:



- *provide comprehensive walking and cycling routes within the existing urban area*
- *develop walking and cycling routes within future developments*
- *develop a cycle link between Naas and Sallins Station*
- *include accepted best practice in the design of cycle routes*
- *encourage walking by providing appropriate detailed design of footways and footpaths. This is vital to get people to use them*

### **Public Transport**

A key component of the preferred framework is a new public transport corridor from Sallins Station through Millennium Park and the town centre to the hospital area. The main transport corridor external to the town is Naas-Dublin.

Bus services must serve the principal origins and destinations within the town, be reasonably direct, be easily accessible on foot and be of high quality, providing certainty, security and comfort. In turn, this requires that buses are afforded priority on the road network.

Good access to Sallins railway station is essential, as is the integration of rail and bus services.

Taxis are a flexible form of transport that can respond to passenger demand on a trip by trip basis. Suitable provision needs to be incorporated into the pedestrian priority zone in the town centre. Measures to be implemented include:

- *develop a bus corridor through Millennium Park*
- *include accepted best practice in the design of passenger facilities*
- *increase frequency on existing bus routes*
- *introduce an upgraded bus interchange on Main Street*
- *encourage bus usage and reliability through priority measures in Main Street*
- *promote rail interchange and integration at Sallins*
- *redevelop taxi facilities within Main Street*

### **Parking and Traffic Management**

Appropriate car parking control and other traffic management measures can regulate private car usage and encourage trips by non-car modes. Nevertheless, the provision of adequate car parking, including off-street parking in the extended town centre, is essential.



In the longer-term, the completion of the relief link roads will provide the opportunity to introduce a major pedestrian priority area in the centre of the town. In the interim, traffic management measures should be introduced to improve the environment, enhance provision for walkers and cyclists and to rationalise on-street parking. To achieve this:

- *provide adequate parking for new developments*
- *introduce traffic management measures in Main Street*
- *provide off-street parking to serve extended town centre*

### **Environmental Impact of Transport Proposals**

Reducing traffic congestion, transferring trips from private cars to walking, cycling and public transport and diverting traffic away from the town centre to the orbital routes will reduce total fuel consumption and improve environmental conditions in the town centre.

The environmental impact of extra travel in the future from the planned larger population of Naas can be minimised by encouraging walking, cycling and bus travel rather than by car.

- *reduce environmental impacts through planning*
- *encourage maximum use of walking, cycling and bus travel*

### **Key Road Infrastructure**

Kildare County Council has advanced a series of road schemes that together will form an inner relief road for Naas town centre. These improvements to the road network are supported in the Framework Plan and are critical to its implementation. They will relieve the town centre of through traffic and provide the basis for the enhancement of the centre and the achievement of pedestrian priority.

Road access to the extended town centre, west of the canal, will require to be integrated with the new road network emerging as the orbital schemes are realised. Routes to the centre from the Sallins Road, Millennium Park and the Caragh Road/ Poopluck areas need to be defined. These routes will provide access to car parking in the extended town centre but will not cross the canal.

There should, however, be provision for good pedestrian and cycling access across the canal, as well as a suitable link for buses, possibly in the form of a lifting or swing bridge that could also provide an attractive feature in the area. It may also be possible to use the existing bridge.

Where further road schemes are considered in the longer term, they should assist in the by-passing of the town centre, help to define the development area of the town and facilitate desirable development.



- ensure that the Kildare County Council committed road schemes are delivered within time
- provide vehicular access to the extended town centre
- consider the requirements for long term road proposals

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Framework Plan will be implemented through:

- land use measures, as set out in reviews of the Naas Town Plan and the Naas Environs Plan; and
- short, medium and long term infrastructure and transportation measures.

The Naas Town Plan, currently under review, should be based on the framework provided by this plan and should address:

- the balancing of development away from the north-east and south of the town towards the north-west;
- the creation of a pedestrian friendly and environmentally attractive town centre through the removal of unnecessary through traffic;
- creation of a more pedestrian and cyclist friendly town through the provision of walking and cycling links;
- the creation of the ring road system to remove through traffic from the town centre;
- the expansion of the town centre to strengthen the shopping base of the town; and
- improvement of access between the town centre, through the expanded town centre, a new residential neighbourhood and Millennium Park to Sallins.

The traditional means of providing infrastructure through the incremental contributions of individual developers is inadequate for the scale of growth anticipated in Naas. It is, therefore, important that critical elements of infrastructure required for the implementation of the framework plan be provided in advance from regional or national funding sources, with appropriate mechanisms for cost recovery from the private development that it will facilitate.

Short term transportation measures include the provision of facilities for bus services, such as shelters, increases in the frequency of bus services, additional traffic signals, improved and extended walking and cycling facilities, improved access and better facilities at Sallins Station and commencement of the spine road that will form the basis for the public transport corridor promoted in the plan.



Traffic management and street enhancement measures in Main Street are also envisaged in the short term.

Medium term measures include the implementation of the committed road schemes, the provision of a car park to serve the extended town centre and further improvements to improve walking and cycling. Once the committed road schemes are completed, the restriction of Main Street to buses and taxis only during the day can be considered.

Long term measures will include investigating the need for further road schemes to the east and south of Naas.

