

**Speech**

**by**

**Martin Cullen T.D.,**

**Minister for Transport**

**At the Launch of**

**Transport 21,**

**Dublin Castle**

**Tuesday, 1st November 2005**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Eleven months ago, my Department was given an extraordinary opportunity by Government: To prepare a plan to transform this country's transport network within a ten-year financial framework. The opportunity was great, the challenge immense. Today, we present our considered response to that opportunity with the launch of Transport 21.

What we are presenting today is no wish list of individual projects. It is an integrated solution to Ireland's current and evolving transport needs. Transport 21 will underpin our competitiveness, promote balanced regional growth and enhance the quality of life for generations to come. At its core is connecting communities and promoting prosperity. And its spine is an unprecedented commitment of capital funding for the next ten years.

Developing an investment framework to complete the job of giving Ireland a 21st Century transport infrastructure was not an easy one, and I want to thank all of those involved and especially my Government colleagues who have contributed to this process from the beginning.

Transport 21 is the product of detailed preparatory work. Detailed preparatory work involving the input of many Government Departments, particularly Finance and Transport, all the transport agencies and many Local Authorities.

Transport 21 builds on the excellent progress we have made since Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats came into office in 1997. We took the critical strategic decision to link Dublin and all our main cities with motorways and we have made major progress on achieving that objective. We have revitalised our railway. We have renewed track and signalling across the network. We have doubled DART capacity and provided over 100 new suburban railcars. Major stations such as Heuston and Connolly have been upgraded. We have funded investment in both the urban and regional bus fleets.

LUAS will carry over 20 million passengers this year, with many people now choosing public transport rather than the car as a result.

These are real and tangible benefits, benefits we can too easily take for granted. They have changed the transport experience for many thousands of people.

But challenges remain. As the Taoiseach outlined, our population is growing. As we become more prosperous, the number of two car households has increased. Lifestyles too are changing. Changing job or changing house are major decisions that affect family life.

House prices or not wishing to disrupt your children's education all impact on the way we live and how we live. This in turn impacts on transport

infrastructure. But these are the challenges presented by a successful economy.

Transport 21 is a recognition of the changing Ireland.

As the Taoiseach said, the total amount of Transport 21 is €34.4 billion - €26.4 billion from the Exchequer, €6 billion from PPPs and €2 billion in private finance from our existing toll roads programme. There will be a major rebalancing of investment in favour of public transport which will receive about €16 billion of the total funding.

There will also be continuing investment in other aspects of our transport system which are not covered by today's announcement – regional and local roads, ports and airports. For example, between 1997 and this year total investment in regional and local roads has amounted to over €4.5 billion, with over two thirds of a billion Euro being spent this year alone. The Government and in particular my colleague Dick Roche, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, are committed to continued investment in these crucial local roads – in every community, in every county.

In showing you what we plan to achieve in Transport 21, I will first outline the national transport programme and then focus on what Transport 21 means for the Greater Dublin Area:

Let me tell you what we plan to do nationally:

#### National Roads

- We will complete the development of the five major interurban motorways, linking Dublin with Belfast, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford by the end of 2010.
- We will complete the development of dual carriageways to Ashbourne on the N2, Kells on the N3 and Gorey on the N11.
- We will improve our strategic road links with Northern Ireland and to the west and northwest by upgrading the N2, N3, N4 and N5.
- We will develop the Atlantic Road Corridor from Letterkenny through Sligo, Galway, Limerick, Cork and Waterford. This will connect the National Spatial Strategy's Gateway Cities. The Atlantic Corridor will involve upgrading the route to dual carriageway and 2+1 road.
- We will continue the improvement of other key national primary routes including the N21 from Limerick to Tralee, the N22 from Killarney to Cork, the N24 from Limerick to Waterford, the N25 to Rosslare and the N30 Enniscorthy to New Ross.
- In line with the National Spatial Strategy, we will undertake targeted improvement of a number of national secondary routes which are particularly important for regional development.

These are:

- the N52 from Dundalk to Nenagh and the N80 from Moate to Enniscorthy, both of which are key cross country linking corridors identified by the National Spatial Strategy;
- the N56 Donegal coastal route;

- the N59 coastal route from Sligo via Westport to Galway;
  - the N67 and N68 along the Clare coast;
  - the N69 along the Shannon Estuary from Limerick to Tralee;
  - the N70, N71 and N86 coastal and peninsular routes in Cork and Kerry; and
  - the N81 to Blessington.
- Up to 2010, our major focus is on the major interurban motorways. Post 2010, we expect to develop approximately 150km of dual carriageway, 400km of 2+1 roads and 300km of single carriageway roads.
  - The roads programme will also have the flexibility to address the access requirements of major new industrial enterprises. I will be working closely with my colleague, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Micheal Martin TD to ensure this.

### National Public Transport

I will now turn to the national public transport network:

- Transport 21 will complete the implementation of the railway safety programme. We will complete the renewal of the railway infrastructure in line with safety priorities and we will substantially improve safety management systems.
- We will complete the renewal of mainline rail rolling stock, involving the delivery of 187 carriages and railcars between 2005 and 2008. This is in addition to the 36 railcars which will be coming into service before the end of the year on the Dublin suburban and Sligo services. The 187 vehicles will permit a phased improvement of service frequencies, with
  - a service each hour on the Dublin-Cork route;
  - a service every hour at peak and every two hours off-peak on the Galway and Limerick routes;
  - services every two hours on the Sligo, Tralee and Waterford routes; and
  - at least four services a day on other intercity routes including Westport, Ballina and Rosslare.

Each of these rail investments will benefit the regions, including the Midlands Hub towns of Portlaoise, Mullingar and Athlone.

- We will re-open the Western Rail Corridor on a phased basis. During the 10-year period, we will reinstate the line between Ennis and Claremorris and, with the support of my colleague Minister for Community and Rural Affairs, Eamon Ó Cuiv TD, we will preserve the remaining alignment as far as Collooney.
- We will introduce a new commuter rail service from Athenry to Galway.
- We will upgrade the suburban rail service in Cork in support of the integrated land use and transport strategy in the Cork Area Strategic Plan.

This will involve re-opening the Midleton line and providing three new stations on the Mallow - Cork City - Cobh line at Blarney, Dunkettle and Kilbarry.

- We will upgrade urban bus services in the provincial cities and support the further development of Quality Bus Corridors and Green Routes, and park and ride, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford.
- We will upgrade regional and local bus services.
- In parallel with the investment programme, we will put the Rural Transport Initiative on a permanent footing from the end of the pilot phase in 2006. This year, the Government will spend €4.5million on the RTI. The cash funding available for this successful and innovative programme will be doubled in 2007 and then increased steadily, ultimately to a cash level about four times what it is this year.

We will also complete the feasibility study of the Shannon rail link, which is examining linking Shannon Airport to both Limerick and Galway cities by rail.

As the Taoiseach has indicated, the Government intends to transfer responsibility for the major commercial seaports from the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources to the Department of Transport.

Along with my colleague, Minister Noel Dempsey, we will advance this matter shortly. This will greatly facilitate the integration of all our transport investment strategies.

Add together each of these elements and Transport 21 will deliver:

- Substantially, faster, safer and more reliable journey times by road;
- New commuter rail services on the Cork – Midleton line and the Athenry – Galway line;
- Increased service frequency, quality and comfort on the mainline rail network;
- New rail services on the Western Rail Corridor;
- Better and more reliable urban bus services;
- Enhanced connectivity with our major airports and seaports; and
- Tangible support for the balanced regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy.

### Greater Dublin Area

The Greater Dublin Area now has a population of 1.6 million and this is forecast to continue to grow. Dublin poses unique challenges to putting in place a 21st century transport network. Transport 21 delivers for Dublin. It is ambitious and, crucially, it is integrated.

Let me focus on what will deliver in the immediate term to improve the suburban rail service and in doing so, extend its capacity and reach:

- A city centre signalling project will be implemented. This will relieve congestion on the city centre rail network, allowing an extra four trains per hour to operate through that bottleneck. This will increase the number of trains per direction per hour from 12 to 16.

- The Kildare line upgrade project, which was recently the subject of a railway order application, will be completed thereby enabling Irish Rail to significantly increase suburban services on that line.

This will provide real improvements to existing rail users from places like Kildare and Newbridge and will also serve new developments like Adamstown and Parkwest.

- We will open a new terminal station in the Docklands.
- This will enable us to deliver new rail services to Navan on a phased basis. The first phase will be a spur from the Maynooth line to Dunboyne. The second phase will extend the service to Navan. Services on the Maynooth line will also be increased.

Critically, we will develop key additional rail projects designed to expand rail and achieve integration between suburban and city centre rail:

- A Rail Interconnector tunnel will be built by 2015. It will link the southwestern suburban line out of Heuston with the northern line. It will serve the Docklands, Pearse Station and St. Stephen's Green. This project will relieve a severe bottleneck in the city centre rail network and permit a major expansion of the suburban rail service.
- Associated with the Interconnector project, the Northern, Kildare and Maynooth lines will be electrified to cater for DART and there will be a significant investment in new rolling stock.
- With an Interconnector in place, Transport 21 will deliver new DART services from the City Centre to Hazelhatch on the Kildare line, to Balbriggan on the Northern line and to Maynooth.

Taken together, these projects will allow rail commuters to connect seamlessly with our new integrated transport hub at St. Stephen's Green.

I now want to outline our plans for LUAS. There will be 7 new Luas projects:

- The Tallaght LUAS line will be extended to the Docklands.
- A spur will be provided off the Tallaght line to serve Citywest.
- The Sandyford LUAS line will be extended,
  - initially to Cherrywood and
  - subsequently to Bray, allowing passengers interchange onto the DART and suburban rail services.
- This means that, for example, somebody travelling from Cherrywood to, say, Dun Laoghaire will be able to take the Luas to Bray and then transfer onto the DART for Dun Laoghaire.
- The two LUAS lines will be joined

- This new cross-city link will subsequently be extended northwards to serve Broadstone and the new Dublin Institute of Technology campus at Grangegorman. Furthermore, it will connect with the Maynooth suburban rail line around Liffey Junction. This means that, for example, somebody travelling from Maynooth to, say, Sandyford will be able to transfer from suburban rail to Luas at Liffey Junction.
- A new LUAS line from Lucan to the City will be provided.

Turning now to Metro. Transport 21 delivers two new Metro services, Metro North and Metro West.

- We will provide a METRO line from St. Stephen's Green to Swords, serving places such as DCU, Ballymun and Dublin Airport. This is METRO North.
- We will build an orbital line, METRO West, linking the Tallaght LUAS line and METRO North and serving among other places like Clondalkin, Liffey Valley and Blanchardstown. This will be built on a phased basis starting from the Tallaght end.

An important feature of the overall rail development plans is the development of an integrated network which will enable passengers to transfer between suburban rail, METRO and LUAS at a number of interchange stations.

- St Stephen's Green will be a key interchange point enabling transfer between LUAS, METRO and suburban rail. In effect, the St. Stephen's Green Station will be to Dublin what Grand Central is to New York – integrating all services at a central City Centre location.

The bus will continue to play a crucial role in the capital's public transport system. It is not a question of bus or rail, but of using both modes to effectively complement each other to maximise the passenger carrying capacity and availability of public transport. Buses will, in particular, be used to meet the immediate and short-term requirement for additional public transport in Dublin whilst other infrastructure is being put in place.

There will be a greater focus on the development of orbital, feeder and local services and integrating the city. The bus network will be fully integrated with and complement the rail network. We plan to increase total bus capacity over the period of Transport 21, with over 80,000 extra bus passenger journeys each day. The Quality Bus Network will be at least doubled over the period to improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of the bus service.

It is in this context, I have asked Dublin Bus to review their network in light of the planned investment and to examine the most effective means of expanding bus services in the short, medium and long-term and they are to report to me early in the New Year. However, I am conscious that Dublin has short-term immediate needs for 20 additional buses in the coming weeks and I will immediately sanction these.

A key objective will be the development of an integrated public transport network and a number of critical elements will be introduced:

- Park and ride facilities will be provided, with a particular focus on rail-based public transport.
- Integrated ticketing and passenger information will be introduced on a phased basis.
- Good quality interchange facilities will be provided, as mentioned already.

Along with the public transport projects outlined, the M50 upgrade will be completed. Feasibility and planning work will be undertaken on the proposed Eastern Bypass and Dublin Outer Orbital Road. We will also carry out feasibility work over the period on additional LUAS projects, including Rathfarnham / Terenure.

Transport 21 will make a substantial impact on congestion. When substantial progress has been made on the implementation of the major programme of improvements in the Greater Dublin Area, then and only then will congestion charges be considered.

The impact of Transport 21 in the Greater Dublin Area will be:

- A huge increase in public transport capacity.
- The suburban rail network will be able to carry an extra 75 million passengers per annum.
- The LUAS and METRO network will be able to carry an extra 80 million passengers per annum.
- The capacity of the bus network will have increased by an estimated 80,000 extra bus passengers each day.
- The M50 will be extended from four lanes to six lanes.

Taken together, our plans will allow the number of public transport passengers in Dublin to increase to 375 million per annum from the current level of 200 million. They will transform the public transport offering, give our capital city a world class 21st century integrated network and will present all commuters with a real high-quality travel choice.

All of the projects which I have mentioned will, of course, be subject to the normal statutory approval process.

Transport 21 also includes a financial provision to ensure that the transport system is accessible for people with mobility and sensory impairments. This will be achieved in two principal ways. Accessibility will be built into new infrastructural projects. Funding will be provided to enable the phased retrofit of existing infrastructure. The details of implementation will be set out in my

Department's Sectoral Plan, required under the Disability Act, 2005. This will be published in 2006 following public consultation.

Brian Cowen, Minister for Finance has already commented on the arrangements for oversight and monitoring the delivery of this extensive programme and we are correct in having a clear focus on value for money.

I am convinced that, in addition to these, we need a new approach to transport in the Greater Dublin Area, delivered through a single authority, with real powers to ensure joined up thinking and delivery across all the transport modes. I will outline further details of my proposals on this matter in the near future once I have brought them to my Government colleagues for consideration.

#### Conclusion

In recent years, we have put in place the first sustained programme to develop the transport infrastructure of modern Ireland. In Transport 21, we are proposing to accelerate this process further in order to deliver a transport infrastructure which supports economic activity across the nation and which enhances the quality of life of every citizen.

Transport 21 is a plan which seizes the historic opportunity to complete the transformation of our country.

It is designed to build a 21st Century infrastructure for a 21st Century country.

And critically, it will connect communities and promote prosperity for generations to come.

Thank You.