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21 June 2006

Ms Geraldine O'Neill
Sub-Regional Transport Plan Team
Transportation Unit
Roads Service
Department for Regional Development
Room 3-29, Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST BT2 8GB



Strabane
District Council
COMHAIRLE CEANTAIR
AN tSRATHA BÁIN

Dear Ms O'Neill

Draft Sub-Regional Transport Plan

I refer to the above document and request, on behalf of Strabane 2000, that the following points are taken into consideration in the final plan:

Pedestrian Bridges

Strabane 2000 is currently running an International Bridge Competition for the design and construction of two pedestrian bridges across the River Mourne.

The first bridge from Meeting House Street will be a pedestrian and cycle link for the communities from the North and South side of the river. It will also be an important link for school children when the new Holy Cross College opens on the Melmount Road.

The second bridge from John Wesley Street unites the town centre with residential and recreational areas on the South bank as well as access to the river for fishing and maintenance. This will be an important link to the proposed new bus/transportation centre on the South bank area so that the public can walk to the bus terminus from the town centre.



Car Parking

Strabane 2000 has identified the growing need for extra car parking within the town centre. Strabane town has lost existing spaces to various developments in the town, including the new library, arts centre and proposed new office building which is to accommodate over 200 staff at the old Cattle Market Site. Not only is there an existing problem but with these new developments and others in the future the problem is going to get much worse.

Strabane 2000 is currently pursuing the possibility of providing a privately contributed multi-storey car park within the town centre to cater for the present and future.

Consideration should also be given to a park and ride/share scheme within Strabane with areas on the periphery of the town identified for parking.

Bus Transportation

Strabane town needs not only a bus depot but also a proper passenger terminus with facilities for waiting, buying tickets, etc, to accommodate all routes. This would also help alleviate traffic congestion caused by buses in Abercorn Square, especially during school term.

Traffic Management

Extended environmental improvement schemes are proposed for the town centre in Strabane, especially in the Abercorn Square area. Public transport in this area should be managed by a strategic transportation plan.

Government Departments should investigate the possibility of purchasing land behind Main Street at the Waterwall near Bridge Street so that a road could be made which would link the Waterwall to Bridge Street. The Waterwall and Main Street could become part of a one-way traffic management system. Also loading to the Main Street properties could be better facilitated via the waterwall.

An on-slip to the By-Pass, adjacent to the new bridge behind the existing ASDA, should be considered to relieve traffic congestion at the junctions proposed at the new ASDA development.

Taxi Provision

Strabane town has currently approximately a total of 130 no taxis, therefore this causes congestion within the town. Strabane 2000 recently got the taxi rank moved out off Main Street down to Lower Main Street, which helped relieve congestion in the town centre. Consideration should be given to providing taxi spaces on the periphery of the town.

Footpath Improvements

General footpath improvements should be considered throughout the town, eg

Leeper's Bray,
Derry Road
Smyth's Mill

Bypass

The Strabane bypass should be identified as a primary or secondary walking route. Consideration should also be given to schoolchildren trying to cross the busy bypass to the rear of the proposed new Holy Cross College on the Melmount Road.

Review

A review/further study should be carried out next year after the Decriminalised Parking Enforcement comes into force in Northern Ireland.

I trust that these issues can be given utmost consideration.

Yours sincerely

Heather Torrens

Heather Torrens
Project Officer – Strabane 2000