

Submission RE: Ireland 2040 Our Plan

I became aware of today's deadline only by reading yesterday's "Meath Chronicle" — the publicity given to these plans was very, very poor. I also query why noon is the deadline rather than 5.00. Accordingly I request that my submission be noted and considered and not just scrapped as being "past the deadline"

To summarize the submission

- 1/ Co Meath and Co. Wick need to be reconnected to the rail network along The N3 corridor.
- 2/ Dublin Airport needs to be served by standard gauge railway — not by Metrolink or other form of glorified Tram
- 3/ The policy of turning abandoned railways into "greenways" should cease
- 4/ The ^{policy of} rehabilitating ~~of~~ further railways should cease (e.g. building a railway through Co. Monaghan at Tyrone instead of rebuilding the "Derry Road" closed and ripped up in 1965 — and no extension of the M3)
- 5/ The building of the North East Regional Hospital in Navan recommended by independent consultants in 2008 is an end to the ^{policy of} ~~the~~ declaring Daghda as a de facto regional hospital

Seamus Murphy



Dear

I refer to recent proposal to "lift" the Navan – Kingscourt railway and to a recent meeting with Iarnrod Eireann in relation to this issue. This is an extremely serious situation as I understand that under current legislation, I.E. is allowed to close a railway line i.e. lift or dismantle) when no train has run for ten years. In this case, the ten years will have expired in October. If I.E. does not observe the letter of the law the line could be gone within weeks, within days!

Anyone with any vision would keep all moth balled and abandoned lines in situ. Then when the economic situation permits a major expansion of the rail network can be planned, this is the only way to deal with the following problems.

- a) Ireland is the most car dependent economy in the world Friends of the Earth
- b) This country is in breach of its obligations under the Kyoto agreement as regards emissions
- c) The world's oil may run out in 30-40 years leaving us not only with ghost estates but "ghost motorways" (Village Magazine)

The Navan – Kingscourt line can be used for the following

- a) Get the gypsum trains running again it was estimated in 2001 that ending the trains had put up to 30 extra trucks a day on the roads. As far as I am aware, no effort has been made to get the trains running again
- b) Rail tours – the railway preservation society of Ireland would love to run a Dublin – Drogheda – Navan - Kingscourt rail tour. Such tours would be great for tourism
- c) Regular summer tourist service to Kingscourt in the case of either b) or c) a connecting bus service could be provided to Dun na Rí forest park
- d) Regular passenger service to Kingscourt giving the railway a foothold in Co. Cavan
- e) Extension of the line to Carrickmacross giving the railway a foothold in Co. Monaghan. This is the easiest way to reconnect Cavan / Monaghan to the rail network. Alternatives e.g. rebuilding Dundalk to Carrickmacross or Castleblayney would present severe financial and / or logistical difficulties even in the event of a major improvement in the economic situation.

I urge all Meath T.D.s and their colleagues in Cavan/ Monaghan to defeat this proposal which is short sighted in the extreme. Of course tourists should be catered for – but by means of a tourist railway walkways and cycle ways can be provided elsewhere. The comparisons given with the Westport – Achill line is not comparing like with like Co. Mayo has six towns(including three principal towns) with a regular passenger rail service.. However the Kingscourt line is Cavan's only line and Monaghan has not even that.

There is a medical maxim – "first do no harm" in other words - I am not asking for millions to be spent on this line NOW but to keep all options open (although I would hope that in a few years money would be available to carry out the basic upgrading needed to get the gypsum trains running again). The same policy should be applied to all mothballed /abandoned lines throughout the country and national legislation should be passed if necessary to bring this about

Exactly 50 years ago the Oldcastle – Kells – Navan line was ripped up. We now curse the authorities of the time for their stupidity. In 2061 will our descendants curse us for our stupidity?

Gerard Murphy

PS a cruel hoax has been perpetrated on the people of kells. We were assured that, when the M3 was open there would be an end to HGV's clogging up the streets. Over a year after the opening HGVs, travelling north – south are continuing to drive through the town, they do not have the excuse as in the case of Drogheda and Enfield that this is the only way to avoid the toll. When I gesticulate at HGV drivers to use the by-pass, they hoot at me or shout abuse. No one in authority seems interested in ending this scandal

H.G.V. BAN INTRODUCED IN 2016
- 6 YRS OVERDUE

Submission re. Draft Transport Strategy 2018-2035

There are three major projects which need to be undertaken in the Greater Dublin area.

1. The Interconnector

This was first proposed years ago and at the time of the recession, plans were well advanced. The Government has now abandoned this project, on grounds of cost apparently – although deciding to proceed with the more expensive “Metro North” project. The interconnector was considered as being the better project by many economic commentators – including some usually hostile to rail projects.

2. Standard Gauge Railway to Dublin Airport

The route for this line from Clongriffin had been identified back in 2001 (?) and should have been planned and built before the recession. If we compare and contrast this with the “Metro North” project incredibly being pursued by the Government (it was the brainchild of the previous Government) we see

Standard Gauge Railway

Metro North

- | | |
|---|---|
| a) can be built relatively quickly | will take at least to 2026 to build |
| b) relatively cheap to build being largely overground (except possibly for an underground station at the airport) | very expensive to build having a large part of the route underground |
| c) can connect with North bound commuter services at Clongriffin and/or direct services to Drogheda and Dundalk | No connection with rail services – different gauge. |
| d) will benefit most of the country via connecting services/direct services eg. Airport to Kildare via The Phoenix Park Tunnel (or Interconnector if built) | will benefit only a relatively small number of people in the Santry and Drumcondra areas. |
| e) will get large numbers of air passengers to where they actually want to go | will exacerbate the present policy of funnelling air passengers into the city centre where they connect with buses/trains to where they actually want to go |

3. Completion of the line to Navan

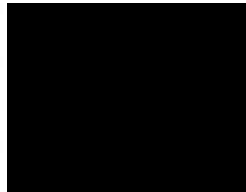
This was first recommended back in 1998(!) and the plan when eventually drawn up was for stage I to Dunboyne (M3 Parkway) to open in 2008 (actually 2010) and stage II to Navan this year(!). It is outrageous that it could be 20 years before this is completed as the “Meath Chronicle” speculated a few weeks ago (ie. Almost 40 years from when first proposed!).

On the enclosed map of the Greater Dublin area, the stub of a line to M3 Parkway is missing. This is typical of the attitude which is slow to die – that Co. Meath is a “small rural county” and

accordingly only needs to be served by bus as opposed to Co. Kildare and Wicklow which need to be served by rail. Thus we have proposals for electrification of the lines to Balbriggan and Maynooth (which already have a good rail service) instead of providing a proper rail service to Co. Meath – the 6th largest county in the state population wise, with a 50% higher population than Co. Wicklow and only 20,000 population less than Co. Kildare.

Whatever about the “Interconnector”, I urge that the rail lines to Navan and Dublin Airport be prioritized and that pending completion no further LUAS projects – barring completion of line BXD – be undertaken. Suggested LUAS projects such as Broombridge to Finglas and new lines to Lucan and Ringsend are simply not a priority and will not get large numbers of cars off the roads. Lucan can be served by rail by opening either of the closed stations on the Sligo and Cork lines.

Gerard Murphy



Speaking on my own behalf and of the commuters of Co. Meath but not representing any specific organisation.

RE: Draft Dublin to Galway Greenway Plan

While I have not seen the entire plan, in principle this is a very good idea. However, I consider it lamentable that it is proposed to destroy forever the Athlone-Mullingar railway by utilizing it as part of the Greenway. In other countries where this has been done, there is no example of a Greenway being re-converted to a railway. The National and Local Authorities are apparently mortally offended at the existence of disused railway lines and have adopted a ~~policy~~^{policy} of destruction eg. Navan to Kingscourt on which Gypsum trains were running until 2001. They are inspired by the success of the Westport-Achill Greenway. But this is not a fair comparison as that railway did not connect two large towns or even a large town and a medium sized town and served a sparsely populated rural area.

On the other hand, if we look at the Athlone-Mullingar line we find

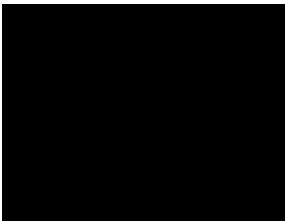
1. These are two of the largest towns in the country and while each has a good service to Dublin, they are not linked to each other – despite being in the same county.
2. This is the original Dublin-Galway line (predating the line via Tullamore). It could be upgraded to take at least some Galway-Dublin and Westport-Dublin trains and some commuter services from Athlone and Moate to Mullingar and Dublin. We can also add that owing to its location Mullingar is a natural railway junction.
3. It could also be used as a diversionary route in case of a blockage on the Tullamore line. This actually happened in the last year with passengers having to be bussed from Dublin to Athlone. As so often in Ireland (unlike in Britain) there is no alternative route – see what happened to Dublin-Belfast trains when the Malahide causeway collapsed.
4. The Railway Preservation Society of Ireland has run railtours on this line in the past and would love to do so again. The Society has hardly^{any} preserved or freight-only lines it can use and so has to run its tours on the main lines, R.P.S.I. trains having to be fitted in between service trains.
5. The line was used in the shooting of the film “The First Great Train Robbery” – Castletown Station doing duty for Ashford Station in Kent.
6. Even the Rail Review (2003) recommended that the line be re-opened to passenger trains and the report was very reluctant to recommend openings/re-openings. Outside of Dublin, Cork to Middleton was the only other re-opening recommended.
7. The line like all others can be used to increase the pathetically small amount of freight being transported by rail (1% as opposed to the E.U. average of 23%).

8. Finally, what is being proposed is another example of destroying history. Too many railways were closed and ripped up, mainly though not exclusively in the Andrews era (1958 – 68). The cost of re-opening even a small percentage of these is very high – though, it has to be emphasized nothing compared to the cost of building motorways from scratch.

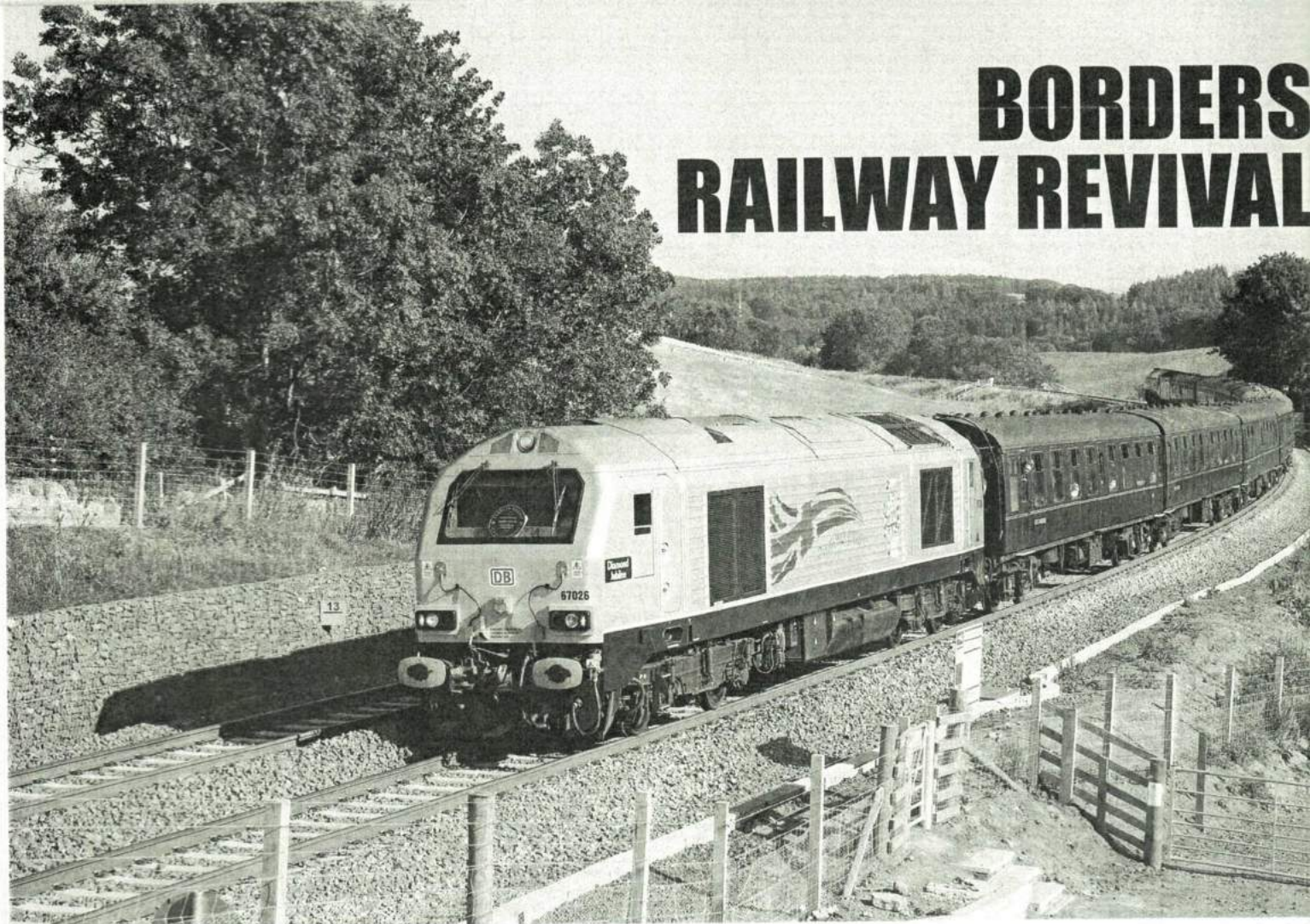
How many more reasons are needed to keep a railway open?

The Dublin- Mullingar and Athlone-Galway sections can be built without using a disused railway (because there is none). With a little bit of vision and imagination the Mullingar-Athlone section can similarly be built without destroying the railway. And I urge that the ^{policy} ~~pattern~~ of converting disused railways to cycleways/greenways at least be halted until the final shape of the Irish rail system is clear – this will probably be in the region of 20 years.

Gerard Murphy



BORDERS RAILWAY REVIVAL



Robert Pritchard takes a trip on the new Borders Railway, now running for 35½ miles from Edinburgh to Tweedbank.

Above: 67026 "Diamond Jubilee" passes milepost 13 on the double track section at Catcune, on the approach to Gorebridge with the return 14.38 Tweedbank–Edinburgh railtour on 10 September 2012. (60009 "Union of South Africa" was on the rear). **Robert Pritchard**

The new Borders Railway from Edinburgh to Tweedbank opened as planned on Sunday 6 September, with an official opening by the Queen taking place three days later. It encompasses almost 31 miles of new railway from Newcraighall to Tweedbank, with seven new stations.

History

The new Borders Railway has its origins in the former Waverley Route, named after the famous series of novels by Sir Walter Scott. This was a through line from Edinburgh to Carlisle built by the North British Railway; it opened as far as Hawick in 1849, and was eventually extended to Carlisle (a total distance of 98¼ miles) in 1862. Though many of its services were dieselised in 1962, the line was recommended for closure in the Beeching Report the following year – with traffic declining its circuitous route, steep gradients and many curves made it the least attractive operationally of the four routes north from the Border to central Scotland. Nevertheless it was a very scenic line, and its closure in January 1969 was a sad loss. Tracklifting was completed in 1972.

The battle to reopen the line

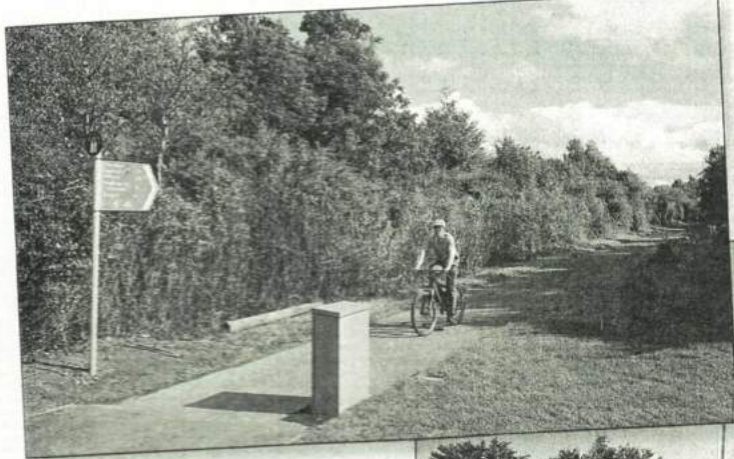
After years of campaigning by the Campaign for Borders Rail, moves to reopen the line to Tweedbank, south of Galashiels, were started

by the devolved Scottish Government in the mid-2000s. The Waverley Railway Scotland Act 2006 received Royal Assent in June of that year, and the project became the "Borders Railway" two years later. Initial route clearance work began in spring 2010 and construction work in late 2012.

After the collapse of the protracted tendering process, Network Rail was awarded the contract to build the line, with the aim of completion by mid-2015 at an eventual cost of



Above: The last northbound working on the line was an RCTS tour from Leeds to Edinburgh on 5 January 1969. With D9007 "Pinza" in charge the train is seen during a stop at Fountainhall station (blocking the level crossing). **Gavin Morrison**



Below: End of the line, for now: 60009 "Union of South Africa" stands at Tweedbank after arrival from Edinburgh with the railtour of 10 September. The traincrew building can be seen to the right.

Left: From Tweedbank a cycleway, the "Melrose Link" continues south and then east. The sign says it is 2¼ miles to Melrose, and 5 to Newton St Boswells on the route of the old Waverley Line. **Robert Pritchard (2)**

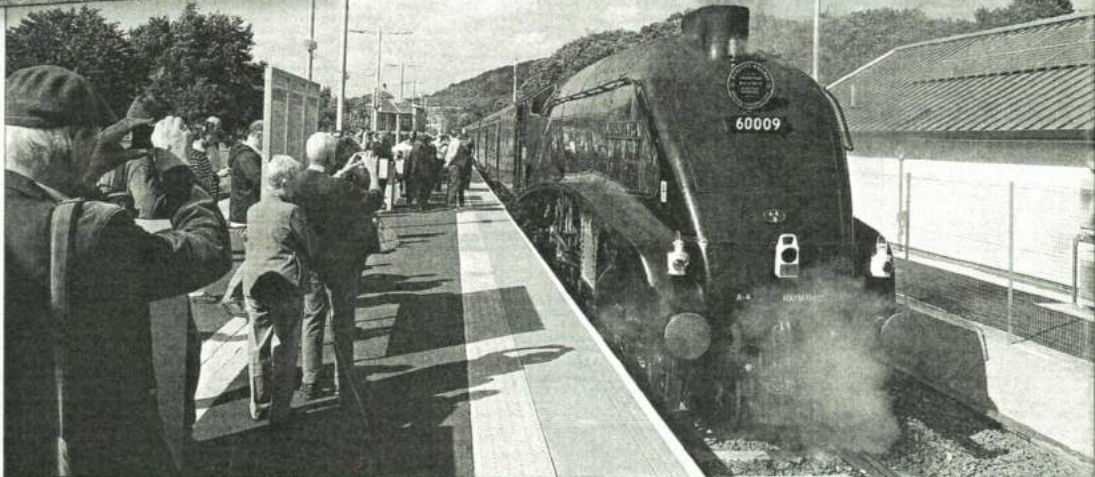
Anytime). The off-peak fare to Galashiels is pitched cheaper than the competing (but slower) X95 bus route, which is £11.70 return, although if you are making a single journey the bus is cheaper at £6.50 instead of £9.30. An Off Peak Return from Glasgow to Galashiels is £22.40, and the usual railcard discounts apply.

Despite what was previously planned (by First ScotRail, before the NS Abellio takeover in April), the Central Scotland Rover ticket is not valid on the Borders Railway beyond its original limit of Newcraighall. This seems very unfortunate, especially considering one of the main aims of the new line is to encourage tourism and inward investment in the region. In a statement suggesting that it may be valid at a later date ScotRail said "The Central Scotland Rover ticket will not be immediately available on the Borders Railway, but we may do so in future. We intend to wait and monitor how our customers use the new line before making our decision." Hopefully VisitScotland will apply pressure to speed up an appropriate decision.

Traincrew

The new line could have been crewed from Edinburgh, but as part of its commitment to make this a true Borders Railway Transport Scotland specified a traincrew depot at Tweedbank. This is now the base for 18 drivers, 19 guards, a driver manager and a conductor manager. ScotRail received a remarkable 2229 applications for the 18 driver posts (starting salary £22 200, rising to £39 200 after training). As well as the Borders line the crews also sign some other local routes from Edinburgh (such as North Berwick) and have booked turns on these. Some Edinburgh crews also sign the Borders line and work certain trains. Most of the Tweedbank crews were recruited locally: they are quick to correct the automated announcements for Stow (it is not pronounced "Stoe" as in Stow-in-the-Wold in the Cotswolds, but more "Stou" as in Stourbridge).

None of the stations are staffed, but they do have ticket machines, departure information screens and waiting shelters.



Possibilities

To reinstate a 30-mile line in little more than 2½ years is a fantastic achievement for which Network Rail and its contractors can be proud. The line will surely prove popular with tourists and commuters alike, bringing inward investment into the Borders region. Ironically the town that is said to have suffered most from the closure of the original line, Hawick, can only now envy Galashiels, and hope that one day it gets its railway back. The major disappointment is that most of the route is single track, the crucial reduction of the double track sections by 6½ miles being apparently at the insistence of Network Rail to ensure the project remained within budget. Having single track is one thing, but only building the bridges for single track is shocking and shows a total lack of foresight, or even of any awareness of the success of other recent reopenings such as the Airdrie-Bathgate line – this is not how the Victorians built railways!

The Scottish Government has made it clear that extension further south will depend on how well the line to Tweedbank is used, although it says it is committed to help extend the route southwards. Hopefully the line can be extended to Melrose, St Boswells and Hawick in time, but I think extending it further to Carlisle is a much more distant prospect, and would also need the support of the UK Government.

At Melrose (just 2¾ miles from Tweedbank) the station is still in situ and there would be room for one platform (a road now occupies the former south side platform). An extra train would be required. Hawick is 17 miles further on from Tweedbank, possibly a little too far for regular commuting to Edinburgh, while part of the old alignment has been built on at Hawick.

Beyond Hawick there are not any towns of significant size on the old route (which is one of the reasons it closed in the first place), though the Waverley Route Heritage Association has a visitor centre at Whitrope.

Conclusions

The route to Tweedbank runs through some very pleasant scenery and is well worth a visit. Travellers from England who are happy with long bus journeys may like to consider reaching the line by one of the scenic bus links, the X95 from Carlisle to Tweedbank or the 67 from Berwick to Galashiels via Kelso. Both routes are operated by First.

Further reading

Three books have been published this year to coincide with the route's reopening:

- The Waverley Route Its Heritage and Revival, Ann Glen, Lily Publications (available from Platform 5 Publishing);
- Borders Railway The Return Journey, Peter Ross, Lily Publications (available from Platform 5 Publishing);
- Waverley Route The Battle for the Borders Railway, David Spaven, Argyll Bookstore.

There is a speeded-up driver's view of the line online at: <https://vimeo.com/132948397>.

Letters to the Editor

Please email your letters to editor@anglocelt.ie or post them to **The Anglo Celt, Station House, Cavan, Tel: 049 4379712.**

NOTE: Contact name, telephone number and address MUST be supplied.

A response to Reflections

EDITOR,
IN Reflections (Duties and opportunities for the churches, Anglo-Celt, March 24) Peter Brady has made many good points. However his history is at fault. He writes: 'Remember the outrage at the treatment meted out to Cardinal Mindzenty of Budapest in 1956 or to Cardinal Stepinac of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Cardinal Mindzenty's abuse began much earlier than 1956; probably as early as 1946. In the latter part of 1956 there was a breath of freedom in Hungary under the moderate Communist leader Imre Nagy. Political parties started to organise again. The Russians started to withdraw. Cardinal Mindzenty had been released from prison. But all that changed on November 4, 1956 when the Russians invaded in force and ruthlessly crushed the Hungarian revolt. (They were 'invited' back by the new party leader; Janos Kadar).

Cardinal Mindzenty sought refuge in the American Embassy. He was to remain there for at least 15 years. I think it was about 1971 when he was allowed to leave for Rome. His subsequent treatment by the Vatican is another story.

When Peter mentions Cardinal Stepinac of Czechoslovakia I think he means Archbishop Stepinac of Yugoslavia. The archbishop was imprisoned there under the communist regime of Marshall Tito. This again was much earlier than 1968; more like 1948 or possibly 1946.

This is just an attempt, poor maybe, to set the record straight.

Yours,
Peadar de Brún,
Ganley Place,
Athlone,
County Westmeath.

Re-open the railway

EDITOR,
BOYNAGHBOUGHT Bridge on the Cavan/Meath border just south of

Kingscourt was recently closed until further notice due to structural concerns (see <http://www.meath.ie/LocalAuthorities/NewsandEvents/Name,46086,en.html>). It is located on the R162, the main artery out of the town leading to Navan and Dublin. The official diversionary route is a lengthy detour via the R165 to just west of Ardee, then the N52 to a few miles south of Nobber.

Meanwhile an asset that could immensely benefit the region, the 19.5-mile Navan to Kingscourt railway line, lies overgrown. The tracks are still in situ but contaminated with vegetation to such an extent that in many places they can't be seen. The last freight train ran in late 2001 and while Iarnród Éireann weedsprays the network annually, the last train to Kingscourt operated in June 2002. Five years later the Navan to Kingscourt line was physically disconnected from the Drogheda to Navan line at Tara Junction (Navan).

A possible avenue worth exploring would be for a private consortium to negotiate leasing the track between Kingscourt and Navan from Iarnród Éireann and restoring it to an useable condition.

While this may be costly in the short term, it could yield a significant return in the long term. Such a project should ensure that any work displaced from road freight finds new income from the railway.

There would be much merit in clearing the line of vegetation and maintaining it free of major growth thereafter. In the medium to long-term there are reasonable prospects of this line being utilised once more either to Kingscourt or as part of a greater route to the border counties/Northern Ireland that are currently devoid of rail. If the line is kept in reasonable condition, it will cost less to reopen it to freight and passenger trains in the future. For this reason there is justification for a modest clean-up of the line now to save much greater sums of money having to be spent at a future date.

In the long term if trains can be restored to Kingscourt the case is stronger for extending the line along a virgin alignment into the North, eg Kingscourt to Carrickmacross, Monaghan, Armagh/Omagh... which would be a natural continuation of the line northwards.

The line would then be classified as an international one and might attract special EU funding.

The superior attributes of rail for moving freight and passengers need little introduction and it is a perfectly reasonable expectation that this efficient mode of transport be reintroduced to Counties Cavan and Monaghan in the years ahead.

Yours,
Bernard H Allan
Cavan,
County Cavan.

Submission re. Development Plan

Rail Services

1. The objective of turning the Navan-Kingscourt line into a cycleway is shortsighted (see attached)
2. The Meath Chronicle reports that the Navan-Kells rail alignment is to be preserved in the Town Development plan (but I can find no reference to this in the county plan). What is really needed is to plan a route for a Kells-Virginia-Cavan line. This would require a deviation from the old route (to run alongside the motorway possibly and then reconnect with the Kells-Oldcastle alignment?) If it is intended to use the old station, then the line can go no further due to the lamentable decision to build apartments opposite the station.
3. A large part of west Meath/east Westmeath is not served by the railway line due to the absence of a station between Mullingar and Enfield. There is a need for a station or stations at Hill of Down, Killucan or both.
4. The Navan-Drogheda line needs to be upgraded to take passenger trains. The Railway Preservation Society of Ireland would love to run tours on this line and in fact applied to run a tour about 5 years ago only to be told that the line was "not passed" for passenger operation (ie. not safe)

Bus Services

1. Bus station for Navan. Is it possible to develop the existing railway station?
2. Several Meath villages eg. Longwood have only a token bus service
3. Development of park and ride facilities at suitable locations on national roads and I understand that this will be done.

Roads

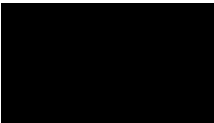
The H.G.V. problem in Kells needs to be addressed (see attached). Also the ring road needs to be completed ie. from the Navan Road to the Ardee Road. I have heard that some H.G.V. drivers believe that driving through the town rather than making a complete circuit of the ring road saves them a lot of money in fuel (Even if true, this obviously does not apply to those travelling north-south).

Walkways and Cycleways

One road where these need to be developed is the N52 bypass at Kells which sees a lot of pedestrians and cyclists at all times of year even on winter mornings – extremely dangerous.

The council's emphasis on the urgent need to advance the two major projects needed in the county ie. the completion of the rail line to Navan and the building of the Regional Hospital is welcome.

Gerard Murphy



Ireland to pay nearly €500m for North's biggest road without considering alternatives

LIKE RAIL

Aughnacloy to Derry road will improve links from Dublin to Derry/Donegal

ANTON McCABE

THERE HAS BEEN MINIMAL discussion in the Republic on the Irish Government's financial contribution to the North's largest-ever road project, the 53-mile dual-carriageway from Aughnacloy on the Monaghan-Tyrone border to Newbuildings, two miles south of Derry. This is intended to improve road-links between Dublin and both Donegal and Derry.

The Irish Government is paying 50% of the cost, the total amount of which is currently given as £844,303,296 (€962,536,140). At the July 2007 North-South Ministerial Council the Government agreed to pay €580m/£400 million towards the A5, and the A8 from Glengormley to Larne. Because of changes in exchange rates, €580m is now £508.756m. Works on the A8 have been postponed.

Up to now the Government has paid €21,685,115.23 (£19 million), according to the Irish Department of Transport. The North's Roads Service is explicit that the project depends on contributions from the Irish Government. Conor Loughrey, Project Sponsor, told the Public Inquiry into the road: "Well, if we hadn't got the contribution from the Irish government then I don't think we would have been looking at a dualling Project at this particular minute in time..."

The brief to the Roads Service from the Government and the Northern Ireland Executive was for a dual-carriageway. Possible cheaper alternatives were not considered. At the Inquiry, Brian O'Sullivan, barrister for the Alternative A5 Alliance, asked Loughrey: "I am simply saying to you as a professional your evidence to this Inquiry is that you felt constrained to limit your options to what the government wanted; isn't that correct?" Loughrey replied: "Yes, to a dual carriageway".

There are environmental questions over the project. Approximately 1,200 hectares (2,965 acres) of land are required for the road, including 250 hectares (618 acres) temporarily during construction. Approximately 250 million tonnes of earth will be displaced.

There are questions over the viability of the road. In 2008 there were an average 2,200 vehicles daily travelling through Aughnacloy to Donegal, and 500 to Derry. Paul Reid, Technical Director of the project, told the Inquiry that a flow of 11,000 vehicles per day was at the lower threshold for a dual carriageway. He said the proposed road will reduce journey times between Aughnacloy and Lifford in Donegal by between 15 and 21 minutes.

The North's Roads Service estimated there would be a 38% increase in traffic on the route between 2008 and 2030. There is a lumbering question-mark over this. According to the Central Statistics Office, there was a 5.9% fall in traffic on the part of the N2 from the Border at Aughnacloy to Monaghan between 2009 and 2010, and 1.7% and 3.4% falls in the previous two years. There is no sign of an economic upturn to increase traffic levels. Fuel-price rises are also reducing car use. Since the project was proposed in 2007, there has been



€1bn dual-carriageway coming soon

a 50% increase in petrol prices. The International Energy Agency estimates prices may rise another 30% by 2014

Sinn Féin has tied its prestige to supporting the project. In June, it proposed a motion in the Assembly, saying the dual carriageway is "essential to the economic regeneration of the north-west region" and calling "on the Minister for Regional Development to give an assurance that there will be no dilution of the project, or delay in its completion". The motion was proposed during the Public Inquiry into whether the road should proceed. Sinn Féin also tabled a 'petition of concern' in response to an amendment from the DUP seeking investigation of alternatives. A 'petition of concern' is designed to allow contentious motions only to be passed if they have cross-community support. Thus the DUP amendment was carried by 58 to 38, but the 'petition of concern' negated this.

On 18 January last year, Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness told the Assembly: "It is imperative that the A5 road project go ahead. I understand that some landowners will have concerns, but they will have opportunities to make enquiries and raise those concerns. However, let nobody be in any doubt whatsoever that those two vital projects — the Belfast to Larne project and the Aughnacloy-to-the-north-west gateway project — will go ahead."

Objectors in the Alternative A5 Alliance have proposed a '2+1' road using the line of the existing road, as less expensive and less environmentally intrusive. The Inspectors are due to make their recommendations from the Inquiry before Christmas. ■

Submission re: Strategic Issues Paper

The problem with Co. Meath is that it is a "dormitory county" with hardly any industry and so has thousands of commuters travelling daily to Dublin. This is in the vast majority of cases by car as successive governments have shamefully failed to provide our county with a commuter rail service in any way comparable to those enjoyed by Counties Kildare and Wicklow. Surely it should be the policy of the national and local authorities to have the maximum amount of passengers and freight transported by rail and the minimum amount transported by road.

Such a system would

- 1) Improve the quality of life for many people
- 2) Help greatly to comply with our obligations on emissions – a win win situation.

Instead, Irish governments have covered the land with a network of motorways thus making the traffic situation worse and increasing our emissions. Co. Meath, although the sixth largest county by population, is only a medium size county by area. So it is incredible to have four (!) motorways running through our county.

Page one of the discussion document seems to take great pride in this and argue that it provides "great connectivity" and is as beneficial to Meath as the rail services are to Kildare and Wicklow.

The railway line from Dunboyne to Navan was supposed to be up and running in 2015 (and this was 40 years overdue) but was shamefully postponed. This line in fact needs to be extended right along the N3 corridor – Kells – Virginia – Cavan. The local authorities must reserve a suitable route for this in their development plans (it is not sufficient to simply reserve the route to Navan). As I stated in my first ever submission on this topic 20 years ago (!), a railway cannot be built if all possible routes are blocked by housing or other development. In this regard, I again have to refer to the lamentable decision to build apartments right opposite Kells railway station.

I understood from reading a previous development plan (plans) that the existing railway lines were to be preserved as such. However, the authorities now seem hell bent on converting the Navan-Kingscourt line to a "greenway". This extremely short sighted decision will mean gypsum continuing to be transported by road forever (or until deposits run out). It was estimated back in 2001 that the switch from rail was putting up to 30 extra trucks a day on the roads. Is it asking too much to have the Navan-Drogheda line maintained as a railway and not converted to a cycleway or "greenway" under any circumstances – even if Tara Mines traffic ceases (If deposits run out or more likely, if the mine owners decide that transport by rail is "too expensive" and they need to invest in a fleet of trucks). This railway should be upgraded and could take as well as freight, occasional passenger trains eg: Railway Preservation Society of Ireland Rail Tours (The R.P.S.I applied to run a tour on this line in 2009 only to be told that it was "not passed" for passenger operations ie. It was unsafe), seaside specials in summer, specials on the day of Laytown races etc.

Every effort should be made to reduce Meath's status as a "dormitory county". Co. Meath needs more industry and the IDA must be made to see that the county is a suitable base for industry. Also we need to increase the number of people working from home. However even if there and other

measures reduced the numbers commuting by 25% (and that is being optimistic), a Kildare/Wicklow style commuter rail service is needed to cater for the remainder (and there should be an all-electric service from Navan ie. It should become part of the DART).

Gerard Murphy



Developing the Dublin – Navan – Kells Corridor as a National Transportation Corridor (NTC or “MultiWay”), instead of building the M3, will have a number of very beneficial effects.

What is an NTC / MultiWay? Essentially, it is a combination of upgraded existing trunk road and re-opened or upgraded nearby rail link. NTCs use new high-frequency train and coach services to radically reduce traffic volumes. This in turn eliminates the need for large-scale tolled road projects, such as the proposed M3.

Some facts and figures re. a Dublin – Navan – Kells NTC (designated NTC3 and known as the Meath MultiWay):

- **New rail and bus services, running from 7am to 11pm daily, and with 20 minute and higher frequencies, would conservatively remove approx 5 million car journeys from the roads in the region annually**
- **Full Clonsilla – Navan rail link would cost € 321 million and generate annual benefits of € 35 million per year**
- **The double-track rail route would run via Ashbourne and Ratoath, with total Clonsilla – Navan length of 48km**
- **Capital investment for the rail link would be recouped in 9 years**
- **This investment is equivalent to just 9 weeks of the current weekly roads programme spend**
- **The Kells extension would cost approx. € 55 million, including a new railcar depot generating local employment. The extension would generate benefits of at least € 8 million per annum, and the capital cost would be recouped within a 7-year timeframe. The investment would equate to just 1.5 weeks of what the state is currently spending every month on the national roads programme**
- **The total joint road / rail benefits would total, again conservatively estimated, at least € 93 million approx. per year**
- **Capital investment to create the MultiWay – the full rail link, the existing N3 upgraded to “2 plus 1” format, bypasses and a step-change in the quality of bus / coach services - would total approx € 835 million, or about the same as the projected out-turn cost of the road-only proposed M3**
- **The M3, if proceeded with as proposed, will generate very significant financial disbenefits to the region via primary and secondary effects. These include accelerated climate change, increased congestion and oil dependency, continuing fall in air quality, loss of agricultural land, severe decrease in amenity, loss of tourism and leisure revenues, retail and other trade losses, increased car dependency, fall in delivery efficiencies and other consequential business losses**
- **A study of the proposed M3 carried out in June 2005 found that the motorway would generate 6 times its construction costs in consequential costs, and push up the cost of driving to motorists by between 16% and 32%**

[More]

Disadvantages of the proposed M3

- 1) Continuing with the M3 in its present form will not control traffic growth;
- 2) The proposed M3 will contribute to climate change exacerbation;
- 3) The proposed M3 will contribute to continuing deterioration in air quality;
- 4) The proposed M3 will not reduce congestion;
- 5) The proposed M3 will increase oil and energy dependency at a time when these resources are dramatically increasing in cost and are peaking in availability;
- 6) New data on these phenomena supercedes that used in the original planning process;
- 7) These phenomena if not controlled will threaten Ireland's current growth rates and competitiveness levels;
- 8) The proposed M3 will facilitate ongoing, unsustainable out-of-town development;
- 9) Consequently, local traders in urban areas of Meath may suffer serious trading losses;
- 10) As a result of the nature, design and routing of the proposed M3, the attractiveness of significant areas of Meath as a tourist destination could be seriously damaged;
- 11) As a result of the nature, design and routing of the proposed M3, the heritage and history of significant areas of the Meath landscape would be seriously compromised;
- 12) In a static income tax scenario, the cost of the proposed motorway and its newly-understood consequential costs will put enormous upward pressure on non-income tax sources of revenue such as commercial rates, indirect taxes, etc. and will continue to take away resources badly needed for non-transport areas such as education and health;
- 13) The proposed motorway is anti-competitive in that it compels people to drive – and at ever increasing costs due to the tolls and increases in fuel and other car running costs;
- 14) The transportation needs of the northwest region, seen as central to the justification of the proposed M3, can be met via new rail connections as detailed in the NEXT Programme (separate proposal), step-change increases in the quality and frequency of coach services, and sustainable upgrading of further sections of the current N3 to the "2 plus 1" format;
- 15) The proposed M3 will reinforce long-distance commuting patterns, further reducing the region to a "commuter ghetto";
- 16) Consequently, Meath will continue to lose its identity;
- 17) In contrast, the MultiWay would encourage local travel patterns, and local, responsible and sustainable development;
- 18) The smaller total overall investment envelope of the MultiWay will free up resources that could be spent on much-needed health and education facilities in the region;
- 19) Re-routing the proposed M3 will not make any difference to its major disbenefits.



- The MultiWay will generate significant benefits using a far smaller investment envelope than any motorway-plus-public transport solution. NTCs paradoxically benefit those who would continue to use the upgraded existing road provided under the scheme, as it would be toll-free and there would be a significant freeing up of road space, thus making driving safer, less stressful and more efficient. This in turn would significantly cut emissions and pollution, and further reduce oil dependency
- Another exciting prospect with NTCs is the use of new fuels for the enhanced local minibus and coach services, such as biodiesel (derived from rapeseed and now being produced commercially in Wexford), or hybrid diesel / electric systems (similar to those now used in cars such as the Toyota Prius)

Advantages of the MultiWay

- 1) Developing a high-quality rail and coach transportation corridor for the route will remove at least 5 million car journeys from the region annually;
- 2) This consequent reduction in the traffic load removes the need for a separate new road alignment in the form of the proposed M3 and benefits motorists by freeing up road space, eliminating tolls and making driving less stressful;
- 3) The consequent reduction in the traffic load means the existing N3 can be widened and upgraded to the NRA's sustainable "2 plus 1" format;
- 4) Full re-opening of the rail line to Navan is viable, with the required capital expenditure being recoupable within a ten-year timeframe;
- 5) A similar investment envelope to that of the proposed M3 will deliver bypasses of Kells and Dunshaughlin to complement the existing Inner Bypass of Navan, with intermediate sections of the road upgraded to "2 plus 1" format, as well as the rail link to Navan, new high-quality coach services and a local minibus network; in short, a multi-modal solution rather than a road-only one;
- 6) The railhead can be extended to Kells using its former rail alignment closed in 1961;
- 7) These improvements via the MultiWay project will deliver benefits to the Meath region of at least € 85 million per annum;
- 8) The high-quality public transport aspects of the MultiWay can be delivered using high-capacity coaches and rail rolling stock, and new local minibuses;
- 9) An integrated smartcard for the region will yield major increases in the use of same public transport modes;
- 10) Reduction in road traffic will deliver *pro rata* reductions in CO2 and PM10 levels;
- 11) On a broader level, instigation of the MultiWay will reduce Ireland's exposure to Kyoto Protocol penalties and will significantly reduce oil dependency;
- 12) The MultiWay would present new business opportunities for contractors, engineering and building services, plus openings for use of hybrid fuel technologies in the coach and rail areas;
- 13) The benefits of the MultiWay will have a very positive role in enhancing Ireland's competitiveness and in maintaining growth rates;
- 14) Work on delivering the MultiWay can begin immediately;
- 15) The MultiWay model can be replicated nationally.

[More]

Submission Re: North East Regional Hospital Location

The hospital should be located in Navan for the following reasons:

1. Navan is the fastest growing town in the region and will be connected to Dublin by railway and motorway. It can also be connected to Drogheda via the existing railway (if upgraded) and the proposed outer Dublin ring motorway.
2. The population of Meath has increased by 50% since 1996. Almost half of the population of the North East Region now live in this county so it is crazy to locate the Regional Hospital anywhere else. Where the population is, there ought the services to be.
3. There is more than enough land available on the periphery of the town, on or near the site of the existing hospital. Such a site could, with proper planning be accessed as follows (a) the Kingscourt-Navan railway line (a station could be built in the vicinity), (b) the Kells road – Athboy road relief road (almost complete?), (c) local bus (d) diverting the Cavan/Kells bus via the aforementioned relief road, (e) it would be easily accessible on foot for the younger and fitter elements of the local population. This is surely preferable to a ‘greenfield site’ at Drogheda which would probably be miles out the road and accessible only by car.
4. Because of it’s proximity to Tara Mines, speedy treatment could be provided for injured miners.
5. The full range of services would be available – so the ridiculous situation whereby Meath (2,300 births annually) has no maternity unit would be rectified.

For almost forty years (since the Fitzgerald report of 1968), the North East Region has suffered from the fallacy that it is a “small rural area” and that five general hospitals are accordingly ‘too many’. This has led to the foolish “two hospitals (in Cavan and Drogheda) policy”. One regional hospital and four county hospitals is NOT ‘too many’ for a population of 400,000. Galway City and County with a population of 231,000 has at least five hospitals and no one to my knowledge has ever claimed that this is too many.

Before ending this submission, I wish to deal with a ‘red herring’ which will no doubt be raised – that Navan is not ‘central’. This can be easily disposed of.

1. Navan is far more ‘central’ than Drogheda which is the most unsuitable location which could be chosen.
2. Cork (for the Southern Region) and Galway (for the Western Region) are anything but central. However no one would dream of locating the Regional Hospital anywhere else.

I appeal to decision makers to (for once) do the right thing by the sixth largest county in the republic and locate the Regional Hospital in Navan.

Gerard Murphv

