

## Heather Cooke

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**Sent:** 23 January 2019 16:17  
**To:** RSES  
**Subject:** submission Draft RSES  
**Attachments:** Convery\_submission\_DraftRSES\_final.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Sir/Madam, please find attached a submission on the draft RSES.

Best wishes, Sheila

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## Observations on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region

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### Non-Work Trips in the Greater Dublin Region

Recent original research<sup>1</sup> investigating the links between spatial structure and travel behaviour patterns in relation to non-work trips demonstrates that critical issues in the Greater Dublin Region<sup>2</sup> include effectively managing legacy issues such as sprawl type patterns of development and providing transport alternatives so that levels of car dependency can be reduced. This requires the uncoupling of economic growth and transportation demand. The prevalence of car ownership as a key determinant of unsustainable travel patterns persists. However, international research provides examples of EU Member States where despite high levels of car ownership; high levels of public transport and active transport use are in evidence (Convery, 2018).

While efforts to address capacity issues to reduce congestion in peak periods and its associated externalities have been ongoing, less attention has been given to daily travel behaviour relating to trips taken to pursue activities which are not employment based.

In a household survey conducted in the region (N= 1298), data was gathered on mode share for 14 journey purposes. Highest shares of active transport use were seen for trips to the pharmacy (52.4%), GP (33.2%), Post Office (54.4%) and the Local Shop (57%). The journey purposes with highest shares of public transport use were the Theatre (32.4%), Attend a class (13%), Cinema (11.9%), Social club (10.7%) and Visit friends and family (9.6%). These findings suggest that with regard to the spatial dispersal of services it is important that local services are provided within walking or cycling range of residences and where this is the case, high mode share for active transport can be achieved.

The highest levels of car use observed, by journey purpose, were for trips to the Supermarket (72.5%); Swimming pool (72.4%), Visit friends and family (70.2%) and the Sports Centre (69.2%). This suggests that with regard to retail, recreational and social trips increased consideration should be given to the spatial distribution of these services and whether alternatives to private car use can be implemented.

A statistically robust analysis of the link between land-use and transport configuration at residence and the travel behaviour observed comprised the core of the research. Selected findings from the research which are important with respect to the Draft Regional Spatial Economic Strategy are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Convery, S (2018, unpublished) Land Use Transport Interactions: Improving the Evidence Base with a Focus on Non-Work Travel. PhD Thesis. University College Dublin. Funded by the Earth and Natural Sciences Doctoral Studies Programme which was funded under the Higher Education Authority's Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions and co-funded under the European Regional Development Fund.

<sup>2</sup> Study region comprises the four Dublin local authority areas and those of Louth, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow.

**Priority areas for targeting transport improvements are at the periphery of smaller towns and cities** where significant amounts of residential development have occurred in recent decades. The research notes that in these areas there is an availability of local services but distances are too far to support active modes and public transport options are lacking. These areas may lend themselves to alternative services and interventions to promote higher shares of public transport and active transport use. They may also benefit from targeted travel behaviour change programmes.

#### ***Innovative responses to transport needs in dispersed areas***

Alternative service delivery mechanisms to provide for peri-urban and rural transport schemes are needed e.g. Clare Bus (Lightfoot, 2016). Consider alternative mechanisms for service delivery (including for e.g. private sector and sharing economies) for specific journey purposes such as retail and leisure activities.

#### ***Sequencing of Service Delivery***

As travel habits can become embedded, particularly with respect to car use and trip-chaining the availability of alternatives from the initial establishment of new residential developments is important. This supports in particular the emphasis on sequential delivery of serviced lands such that transport and associated services are in place prior to residential blocks being completed.

Overall the Draft RSES shows a comprehensive response to many of the key issues in the region and aligns with the national objectives as set out in the National Planning Framework. Particularly welcomed are the following:

- i) the use of the Settlement Typology and Asset-based approach with respect to providing for appropriate levels of development at a scale which relates to the function and potential of each settlement type
- ii) support for increased residential densities and compaction where appropriate
- iii) the emphasis on the integration of transport and land use planning and the associated use of Local Transport Plans
- iv) additional measures to support active and public transport use at all scales which is considered essential to reduce car dependency.

#### **Additional Sources**

Convery, S., Williams, B. (2018) Exploring the influences of neighbourhood type and attitudes on non-work travel behaviour patterns: insights from Ireland. *European Transport Conference*. Dublin Castle, Ireland. 10 - 12 October, 2018 Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328744342\\_Exploring\\_the\\_influences\\_of\\_neighbourhood\\_type\\_and\\_attitudes\\_on\\_non-work\\_travel\\_behaviour\\_patterns\\_insights\\_from\\_Ireland](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328744342_Exploring_the_influences_of_neighbourhood_type_and_attitudes_on_non-work_travel_behaviour_patterns_insights_from_Ireland)

Lightfoot, G. (2016) Flexible and accessible integration: The experience of Clare Accessible Transport/Clare Bus. Proceedings of the ITRN2016. 1-2 September, 2016. DIT Grangegorman. Dublin, Ireland. Available at [http://www.itrn.ie/uploads/2666\\_Lightfoot\\_ClareBus.pdf](http://www.itrn.ie/uploads/2666_Lightfoot_ClareBus.pdf)