

Ms. Edith Roberts
Senior Executive Engineer
Transportation Division
Roads and Transportation Directorate
City Hall
Cork
T12 T997

07 July 2016

RE: Cork City Centre Movement Strategy – Phase I & II

By email to edith_roberts@corkcity.ie

Dear Ms. Roberts,

Energy Cork and, in particular, its Transport Membership Sub Group welcomes the commencement of the Cork City Centre Movement Strategy (CCMS) – Phase I & II consultation and the opportunity to contribute to the successful implementation of this very worthwhile strategy.

As you will be aware, Energy Cork is an industry-driven cluster pursuing coordinated actions to strengthen enterprise and employment within the energy sector in the Cork Region. The Cluster is supported by Cork City Council and Cork County Council through their respective Economic Development Funds. Energy Cork was initially conceived by Cork Chamber with a view to building on the unique opportunities for the region to secure competitive advantage in the energy sector. The Cluster currently has over 80 corporate members.

Having reviewed the consultation documentation, Energy Cork entirely supports Cork City Council's objective for the CCMS and the key principles of ensuring a more appropriate balance between the different transport modes serving the city and, in particular, improving the environment for public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists.

In this submission we will restrict our comments to the realm of public transport and, in particular, bus transport in the city. This reflects our ongoing initiative **Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet**, developed with the crucial support of Bus Éireann, Gas Networks Ireland, UCC, Cork Chamber, Cork City Council and Cork County Council and in co-operation with the NTA and DTTAS.

The CCMS consultation document itself outlines the growing importance of bus transport in Cork, especially in light of the increasing number of workers projected to be accessing the city centre in the future, and the Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet concept proposes to unlock the cost savings and emissions reductions inherent in Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) bus technology, as well as the potential for renewable biogas to improve the sustainability of Ireland's transport system in the medium term. In addition to the emissions reductions inherent in CNG buses, improvements in bus

travel times and usage (avoiding private car usage), made possible by the CCMS measures, will reduce CO₂ emissions further. It is clear that the implementation of the CCMS and Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet in Cork will be mutually beneficial and supportive.

Energy Cork's Transport Sub Group has, over the last three years, pursued, in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders including Cork City Council, a number of projects aimed at promoting sustainable transport and encouraging the development of Cork as a low-carbon vehicles hub. The importance of the transportation sector to Ireland's energy and environmental landscape is dramatic. Transport use is responsible for over 40% of Ireland's energy demand (almost 100% imported) and over one third of greenhouse gas emissions. In 2014, Energy Cork and the EU's BATTERIE Project co-hosted the successful *Cork Transport Alternatives 2022* conference which, amongst other outcomes, demonstrated the appetite for low-carbon vehicle alternatives such as electric cars and natural gas/biogas fuelled public and commercial vehicles. Following that conference, Energy Cork prepared a position paper (enclosed) on *Cork – A low-carbon vehicle hub*. As a result of this paper, and in co-operation with a range of stakeholders, two major low-carbon vehicle initiatives have been undertaken in Cork:

1. **Drive4Zero** – which has successfully promoted and seen the increase in the number of electric cars in Cork by over 250% in one year as well as facilitating the deployment of 24 new charging points in a range of employer and parking locations.
2. **Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet** – a proposal to introduce CNG fuelled buses, and associated refuelling infrastructure to the Bus Éireann Cork bus fleet. It is initially suggested that 20 buses be deployed on the 220/220X/223 bus routes serving Ballincollig, Cork City, Carrigaline and the Ringaskiddy area, and thorough cost-benefit and environmental analyses have been carried out on this basis. It is envisaged that the CNG fleet be expanded to all Cork City service buses over approximately five years, dependant on funding.

Energy Cork is keen to ensure that any decision by NTA/Bus Éireann to procure and deploy CNG buses in Cork is matched by growing demand and increased prioritisation for bus transport across all routes. Energy Cork therefore welcomes and supports the CCMS strategy.

The full benefits of Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet are outlined in Appendix I of this response. These benefits include:

- Annual CO₂ emissions reductions of 10% compared with diesel alternatives, a larger reduction will accrue due to modal shift and improved bus travel times based on the implementation of the CCMS.
- Annual fuel cost savings of approx 25% compared to diesel alternatives, as well as improved fuel diversity
- Annual reductions of over 70% in transboundary gas emissions (namely NO_x, SO_x and PMs)

Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet will further establish Cork as the national hub for low carbon transport in Ireland, complementing the existing *Drive4Zero* campaign for electric vehicles the Cork City Cycling Strategy and, of course, the Cork City Centre Movement Strategy.

In conclusion, Energy Cork strongly supports the proposals presented for Phase I & II of the CCMS. In particular we welcome the initiatives aimed at reducing bus travel times and increasing bus prioritisation in the City. We encourage Cork City Council to continue to be ambitious in supporting bus transport prioritisation in Cork. In particular, we suggest continued and increased proactive community engagement with the residential and business community in promoting the benefits of the CCMS.

I have enclosed additional information regarding the Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet initiative. The Energy Cork Transport Sub Group is planning additional activities in the coming months to promote the benefits of Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet and the wider uptake of public transport options as envisaged by the CCMS. We would be delighted to meet with you, at your convenience, to discuss these initiatives further.

Yours sincerely,



Kieran Lettice
Cluster Manager
Energy Cork

APPENDIX I

Benefits of the Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet initiative

Ireland's Greenest Bus Route, implemented in Cork will mean:

- a direct contribution to two of the four overarching actions in the *Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future* namely actions to deliver a radically improved public transport service and actions aimed at alternative technologies;
- annual savings in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of approximately 10% over diesel alternatives, contributing towards Ireland meeting a mandatory reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of 20% below 2005 levels by 2020 under EU Decision 406-2009-EC;
- annual fuel cost savings of the order of 25% aligning with green procurement procedures as required under EU Directive 2004-17-EC;
- an overall economic benefit of €1.3 million based on operating 20 buses for 10 years;
- annual reductions of over 70% in transboundary gas emissions (namely NO_x, SO_x and PMs) contributing to Ireland's requirements under Directive 2001-81-EC on National Emissions Ceilings;
- increasing fuel diversity in transport (almost 100% dependent on oil), thereby increasing Ireland's energy security and resilience;
- a contribution to key objectives of both the City Development Plan and the Cork County Development Plan to provide an enhanced public transport network and to encourage modal shifting to public transport (Carrigaline has one of the largest proportion of single occupancy car commuters in Ireland); and
- advancement of the development of a network of CNG refuelling points in urban / suburban areas by 2020 and at every 150km along the Core network by 2025 as required under EU Directive 2014/94/EU on alternative fuels infrastructure.

Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet will initially be powered by Compressed Natural Gas, which with the advent of Corrib gas, currently on target to supply 60% of Ireland's gas demand in 2016, makes energy in transport more secure, in addition to the lower cost and lower impact on the environment mentioned above

In addition to these direct benefits, Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet will open a pathway for the use of Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) as a transport fuel, which will lead to further more significant emissions reductions, and make Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet near carbon zero public transport. This will be a significant and contribution to Ireland's mandatory target to achieve a 10% renewable

energy share for road and rail transport by 2020, which has historically proven to be one of the most difficult targets to achieve, not just in Ireland

Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet will also provide a starting point on which to further expand the use of CNG bus technology in Ireland, building on successful experiences elsewhere in Europe (there were over 12,000 CNG buses in the EU in 2014) and the successful trials that took place in Cork in 2012/2013.

Ireland's Greenest Bus Fleet can also actively contribute to the Government Action Plan for Jobs by engaging with engineering / light engineering companies in the region to;

- establish in Ireland the supply chain for the manufacture, and installation of CNG filling stations at strategic locations to be agreed throughout Ireland;
- establish a business relationship with suppliers of CNG vehicles, both new and diesel conversions, who may consider installing a CNG plant to service their customers' needs; and
- working with fuel supply outlets, both wholesale and retail to promote CNG and install outlets.