

**Statement by Shane Ross**  
**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport**  
**to the**  
**Joint Committee on Transport, Tourism & Sport**  
**Supplementary Estimate**  
**5 December 2018**

I thank the Chairman and the Committee for this opportunity to present details of this Supplementary Estimate for my Department.

As you are aware from the advance brief, already circulated, there are 2 elements to this supplementary estimate - €6 million from the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) dividend and €37.5 million which has been agreed with the Minister for Finance and for Public Expenditure and Reform to boost investment across the Transport, Tourism and Sport sectors.

Given the IAA's strong financial performance and significant surplus cash reserve, it was agreed that they were sufficiently well funded to pay at least one "special dividend". This is in addition to the agreed annual dividend policy of 30% of profits after tax. As part of that agreement the IAA committed to further special dividends in 2019 and 2020, subject to prevailing conditions. As was the case this year, I will consult with Minister Donohoe with a view to retaining a portion of the special dividends, to again be reinvested in the work of my Department.

The second part of the supplementary estimate - €37.5 million is being allocated for a range of projects.

The Estimates for 2018 already provide an overall gross allocation to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport of €2.03 **Billion**. This additional money will now bring the total allocation to €2.07 **Billion**. Our total allocation is used to provide investment in critical infrastructure and to ensure that vital services are available to the public during 2018.

I will now briefly go through the areas that are recipients of this additional money:

### **Aviation – Programme A**

The funding of €1.5 **million** will assist the operational grant applications from the regional airports. The majority of this funding focuses on supporting the wage costs for the provision of essential safety and security services.

### **Land Transport – Programme B**

In the **Public Transport** area, **€5 million** has been allocated for Bus and Luas investment. This will partly fund bus fleet purchases and partly fund a stage payment for the eight additional Luas trams that are being purchased under the Green Line Capacity Enhancement project.

**€200,000** will go towards an Irish Rail Accessibility App which will assist rail users with sensory or mobility impairments. **€400,000** will be invested to improve safety of cyclists by installing in Cyclist Detection systems at junctions.

**€3 million** is for working capital relating to the bus market opening (BMO) programme, which commenced on 9<sup>th</sup> September. The working capital requirement for bus market opening arises from the gross cost contract arrangement with Go Ahead and Bus Éireann for routes that have been opened to competition. In this case, the NTA will collect all fare revenues and carry the associated revenue risk.

**In the Roads area** the main recipient will be the **regional and local roads**, with an additional allocation of **€15.03 million** towards roads maintenance. As you are aware in recent years the impact of severe weather has intensified the vulnerability of an already weak network in need of maintenance and repair. This amount will be allocated to local authorities affected by such events this year under a new '**Special Maintenance Grant**'. In addition, **€700,000** will also be allocated to Regional and Local Roads for Salt Purchase. The severe winter, just gone, resulted in exceptionally high salt usage so this additional money will ensure there are adequate stocks in place again.

**National roads** will be increased by **€3 million** to cover winter operations, public lighting and other outstanding maintenance.

**€7 million** will be used for a payment to FBD in respect of the compensation, legal costs and court interest payable on a case from 2009 where a Court of Appeal found the State had liability.

## **Maritime – Programme C**

The Search and Rescue helicopters have been adapted for Night Vision Imaging System (NVIS) and the necessary night vision goggles have been purchased. This system is necessary to improve search and rescue capability. The allocation now in the supplementary estimate of **€1.7 million** will go towards the provision of training on the use of the Night Vision Imaging System which will complete the project to adapt helicopters and crews to Night Vision Imaging Systems.

## **Sport – Programme D**

**€1.5 million** is being allocated to Sport Ireland for high performance sport. This funding will be used to assist athletes' preparations for major competitions including the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo and key World and European Championship events.

**€1.12 million** is being provided to Sport Ireland to meet the following costs:

- Irish Open Golf – €750,000
- Paralympics Ireland – €100,000
- Anti-Doping - €120,000
- Women in Sport Programme- €150,000

## **Tourism – Programme E**

**€500,000** will be spent by Fáilte Ireland targeting short breaks over the winter specifically to visitors from Northern Ireland.

**€100,000** will be spent by Fáilte Ireland supporting more international publicity.

**€250,000** will be spent to enhance the programme for the New Year's Festival Dublin, to deliver an even better festival and to attract and grow additional tourist traffic at a time of year when we have spare airline and accommodation capacity.

**€2.5 million** will be spent by Tourism Ireland on a range of tourism marketing initiatives

My Department has a vital role to play in Ireland's social and economic prosperity and I am pleased to say that this additional allocation, together with the funding committed over the lifetime of the National Development Plan, will enable us build a better Ireland.

I would be happy to address any questions that this committee may have.