

Statement by Shane Ross
Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport
to the
Joint Committee on Transport, Tourism & Sport
Supplementary Estimate
4 December 2019

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

As the Committee will be aware, in 2019, as the Government advanced its original preparations for the risk of a “No-Deal” Brexit on 31st October, supplementary funds were not available for new initiatives or programmes. However, I have successfully secured funds to support the ongoing work of the Department in some key areas. As a result, €10 million has been agreed with the Minister for Finance and for Public Expenditure and Reform to boost investment across the Transport, Tourism and Sport sectors.

The €10 million is being allocated as current expenditure in primarily two programme areas, public transport and tourism.

The Estimates for 2019 already provide an overall current allocation to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport of €755 million. This additional money will now bring the total allocation to €765 million. Our total allocation is used to provide vital tourism investment as well as to support the ongoing delivery of the National Transport Authority’s remit.

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

Land Transport – Programme B

In the **Public Transport** area, **€0.617m** has been allocated to the Medical Bureau of Road Safety. This is to fund an estimate of €0.308m in pensions non-pay which arose during the re-profiling of the pension estimate in 2018 from pay to non-pay. €0.309m is to assist in the purchase during 2019 of Preliminary Breath Test Devices, used by the Gardaí to test drivers for alcohol consumption.

€583,000 has been allocated to the National Transport Authority to purchase approximately 325,000 anonymous Leap cards in order to ensure that sufficient stocks are in place early next year.

A further €1 million has been provided to the NTA as follows:

- €100,000 is being allocated to the NTA for additional general administrative expenditure
- €450,000 is being allocated to the NTA for ICT infrastructure (licensing and system updates); and
- €450,000 is being allocated to the NTA for rental costs associated with additional accommodation which is required to be paid in advance under the terms of their rental contracts.

Sport – Programme D

€0.8 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.

Tourism – Programme E

€1 million will be spent by Fáilte Ireland on Domestic marketing, with a particular focus on the border counties. This marketing will include: Social Media Campaign Engagement with Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland consumers; data analytics on Northern Ireland consumers; a domestic print campaign; and a local expert programme supporting border counties .

€6 million will be spent by Tourism Ireland on a programme of reassurance concerning Ireland as a Tourist destination, given the uncertainties raised by Brexit. The new deadline for Brexit means that the UK can still leave with “No Deal” if the Withdrawal Agreement with the EU is not ratified by Parliament by 31st January 2020. As a result, it is vital that my Department continues to take steps to provide as much certainty as possible in our source Tourist Markets.
