

## **D/Transport - Opening Statement for Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Climate Action**

### **Sectoral Emissions Ceilings**

28 June 2022

Thank you Chair and Committee members for the opportunity to outline the Department of Transport's ongoing engagement and inputs to the setting of sectoral emissions ceilings under the Climate and Low Carbon (Amendment) Act 2021.

To begin by introducing myself and colleagues on the call, I am John Martin, Principal Officer over a new Climate Engagement and Governance Division that has been established in the Department, and I am also joined this morning by my colleagues, Aoife O'Grady, and Andrea Lennon.

Andrea heads up our Energy, Air and Adaptation Division which includes policy on renewable fuels and biofuels for transport, and Aoife leads our Climate Delivery team, which focuses on facilitating the transition to electric vehicles, our EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy and the establishment of the Zero Emissions Vehicles – Ireland (ZEV) office. For my own part, I hold responsibility for coordination and reporting on our obligations under the Climate Act and Climate Action Plan; supporting the implementation of our recently published Sustainable Mobility Policy through the SMP Leadership Group and Delivery team; and for improving our engagement with the public and our partners in the transport sector on climate action.

In terms of today's meeting, members of the Committee will be well aware, that transport accounts for approximately 18% of our national greenhouse gas emissions, and our initial baseline and emissions abatement target going into the sectoral emissions ceilings process with colleagues in the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, was to deliver a 51% emissions reduction from a 12.2 MtCO<sub>2</sub>eq. baseline in 2018, to approximately 6 MtCO<sub>2</sub>eq. by 2030.

I note that the indicative levels of abatement expected for each sector of the economy in CAP21 set a range of 42-50% to be delivered in transport, and both Minister Ryan, and we as a Department, are committed to delivering to the maximum end of this range, while acknowledging both the scale of the challenge involved for the sector and society but also the huge benefits to be derived in terms of quality of life as well as carbon abatement. There has been significant expansion in the Department over the past year of our climate teams to ensure that we have adequate resourcing, and the people and capacity in place to help us achieve this ambition.

As many of you will have heard the Minister comment repeatedly, as a sector, transport faces an extraordinary challenge in terms of achieving the required emission reductions in the timeframe envisaged. This difficulty arises from the scale and level of both the personal and systems transformation that will be required, to shift from settlement patterns and travel behaviour which have been embedded over decades, and which are dominated by the use of private cars.

Moreover, as highlighted by the recent EPA report on our Greenhouse Gas Emissions projections and recent IPCC reports, the current suite of CAP21 measures for transport are projected to deliver a 39.3% reduction in emissions, falling short of our 51% abatement ambition, and that further immediate, and

deep action is required. We acknowledge and accept this shortfall – which we have termed our ‘gap to target’. This gap was also noted in the modelling undertaken for the development CAP21 as a 0.9 MtCO<sub>2</sub>eq. shortfall to be identified through additional measures.

In recent months, we have undertaken a significant volume of work with the NTA and our modelling team, our agencies, academia, and other transport stakeholders and partners, to refresh and recalibrate our modelling and to identify additional measures that could be implemented, recognizing the need to ensure fairness and equity in the impacts of such measures.

A few areas were selected for particular attention, including: identifying measures to reduce the volume of ICE vehicle kms travelled; a focus on rural transport and just transition; supporting the decarbonization of the freight sector; and possible regulatory and financial or taxation measures that could support transport decarbonization. I note that these areas are also highlighted in the Committee’s report of last July on measures to reduce transport emissions by 51%, which formed a useful input to this process.

An important part of this analysis was also to consider how any additional measures might be introduced in a manner that supports a ‘just transition’. A report on this engagement and updated modelling results are expected to be received this summer, in advance of the annual update of the Climate Action Plan.

Finally, while negotiations on the sectoral emissions ceilings are ongoing and draft recommendations are yet to be presented to Government, I can say that our engagement with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications has been constructive with a clear focus on agreeing ceilings that recognise the deliverability and timing impacts of the measures involved.

The process has also sought to ensure greater alignment of the base assumptions underpinning the analysis involved. In particular, there is a recognition in the carbon budgets relating to the emissions reduction trajectory that can be expected from the transport sector, that a greater level of emissions abatement will be achieved in the second carbon budget period.

This trajectory needs to align with the likely take up in electric and other alternative technology, ramping up of transitional biofuels and renewable fuel, and the longer lead-in times for roll-out of additional infrastructure and services. Critically it needs to recognise the level of behavioural and systems change that will be required.

To be clear, the introduction of sectoral ceilings will present real and immediate challenges for the transport sector – a sector which impacts directly on the lives of all our citizens. As such, the level of transformation needed will require strong buy-in at a political and at a citizen level as we seek to accelerate delivery.

The ongoing war in Ukraine, spike in energy costs tied to increased cost of living, and supply chain shocks that are particularly affecting the supply of electric vehicles, present real challenges and unfortunately have added to the level of challenge involved. They have also galvanized support towards a shift away Europe’s dependence on fossil fuels.

It is thus, our view, that beyond the existing measures in our Climate Action Plan, the best means of achieving our goals will be through enacting further policy measures that directly reduce transport demand, and which prioritise, facilitate, and support behavioural shift to more sustainable modes. Part of our role over the coming period will be to ensure that we present and communicate policy measures that will lead us to the sustainable future transport system that we are trying to achieve, in order to bring the public with us – a future system that is less congested, and which prioritises well-being

We look forward to continuing our engagement with our colleagues in other Departments to support us in this vision, and I am happy to take or share any questions with my transport colleagues.

Thank you.