

# Rail Policy update

**Mayo County Council**

**Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Planning and  
Marine Strategic Policy Committee**

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# Overview

- **All-Island Strategic Rail Review (AISSR)**
  - Overview
  - Key Recommendations
- **Recommendations specific to Western Region/ West**
  - AISSR proposals
- **AISSR Process**
  - Submissions invited on the Draft – deadline 29 September 2023
  - Follows Public Consultation in 2021/21
  - WDC Submission Jan 2022: service frequencies, journey times and *a key route that should be considered is Derry-Letterkenny-Sligo-Claremorris-Tuam-Galway and onwards to existing services to Limerick, Cork and Waterford.*



## Draft All Island Strategic Rail Review (AISRR)

- Commissioned by Department of Transport & Department for Infrastructure NI
- A Draft report, 30 recommendations over short-term (to 2030), medium (2030-2040), long-term (2040-2050)
- Recommendations ‘do not represent official policy’ but ‘plausible choices’ for policy makers
- More detailed work to test the feasibility, affordability & subject to Govt Spending Code & Capital Appraisal Framework.



## Draft AISRR – Overview contd.

- Final list includes approx. half the 70 geographic specific projects examined.
- Capital cost est €36.8bn (2023 prices), approx. 75% Ireland
- €1bn per annum over existing plans.
- Roughly equivalent to peak annual investment in motorway network in late 2000s.
- Recommendations are framed in the context of 6 goals:
  1. Decarbonisation (increasing rail patronage away from cars & electrification)
  2. Intercity
  3. Regional & Rural
  4. Sustainable cities
  5. Freight
  6. Economic Feasibility



## **Key Recommendations – Intercity & Regional & Rural**

- (A) Service Frequencies (B) Journey times (C) New lines & services

## **Service Frequencies**

- Intercity routes: Dublin – Cork, Waterford, Limerick, Galway, Belfast
- Interregional routes Dublin – Sligo, Ballina/Westport, Tralee etc & Galway-Limerick
- Increased no of services: one train per hour (Intercity Dublin -Galway)
- Increased no of services: one train per two hours Dublin – Sligo, Dublin – Westport/Ballina, Galway-Limerick).

## Journey Times

- *the Review argues that journey times between the main cities should be **materially faster than car journeys***
1. Increased speeds (Intercity Galway – Dublin top speed 200km/h)
  2. Increased speeds other regional routes increased speeds (Dublin- Sligo/ Westport/Ballina/ Galway-Limerick - top speed 120km/h)



## New lines/services

- dual tracking & some four-tracks especially in the approaches to Dublin.
  - New line Portadown to Derry/LondonDerry, Reinstated Mullingar- Athlone, Waterford-South Wexford.
1. Double-tracking Galway-Athenry.
  2. Re-instatement single-track Claremorris-Tuam-Athenry.
- Improved journey times - investment in signalling, track, level crossings, rolling stock.
  - Journey times Tuam to Athenry??

# Recent Policy Context - WRC

## New lines/services

- McCann Report
  - Claremorris- Collooney: Preserved and viability reviewed
  - Claremorris-Tuam/Athenry section the assessment was that the line is *an important link for the island's rail freight network*
  - Tuam-Athenry potential for passenger commuter services

- Success to-date:

Phase 1 Limerick–Galway or Ennis –Athenry or Athenry – Oranmore –Galway?

- Latest policy context: PfG/ EY Report/ West on Track report/ AISSR





## Recent Policy Context - WRC

- Pfg 2020 (October 2020) *Consider the report\* on the future of the Western Rail Corridor and take appropriate action.*(p.15) \*Government commissioned the EY report (June 2020).
- EY report found that the costs of reviving the line between Athenry and Claremorris would be greater than the financial benefits. Benefit/cost ratio 0.21 and recommended the *do nothing option of leaving the line inactive*
- In 2020, Dept of Transport review of the project material prepared by EY. Jaspers report said that EY's findings are *not unreasonable and that the project in its current form is likely to present a very weak justification for investment*
- In 2021, West on Track produced a report arrived at a positive benefit cost ratio (1.04).
- NDP 2021-2030 (published Oct 2021) committed to the All island Rail Review



## AISSR

1. Re-instatement single-track Claremorris-Tuam-Athenry.
  - On Colloney – Claremorris, the Review noted *there would be very low demand for passenger rail services on this route and that building a railway on this corridor would have a significant adverse impact on the environment.*
  - Claremorris-Athenry section: the assessment was that the line is *an important link for the island's rail freight network, and that the town of Tuam would probably generate demand for a passenger service.*
  - Elsewhere it suggests that the line could be reopened for freight in the first instance which may indicate lower journey speeds.



## Recent Policy Context - WRC

### Maps

- The maps below outline today's railway network showing the single, double and four track sections along with the electric sections and (currently) planned upgrades (AISSR, p.22.Figure 1).
- The map showing a potential future railway (AISSR pg 12), outlines electrified and new railways, track upgrades and other improvements.

# Today's Railway & A potential future railway





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