

NRA Service Area Policy

National Roads Authority



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1 Introduction

1.1 General

The National Roads Authority (the **Authority**) is a statutory body charged with providing a safe and efficient network of national roads. It is increasingly accepted that a safe road network includes the provision of sufficient parking areas to allow drivers to stop and rest. In fact, this need has recently been given legal standing by European Union regulations under the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) policy.

The purpose of this document is to set out the policy basis on which service areas will be provided to meet the needs of road users on the National Road network in Ireland.

The Authority will, subject to an Bord Pleanála approval, include appropriate on-line service areas as an integral part of the roads when planning new or upgraded dual carriageways (including motorways). The likely locations are noted in this document for a number of schemes, and will be identified for other future schemes as they arise.

The Authority will also, subject to an Bord Pleanála permission, add on-line service areas to the existing dual carriageway network at a number of locations, but in deciding on the extent of on-line retrofit will have regard for the extent of off-line service area provision. The policy contains details of what is intended in this regard.

The Authority has no plans currently for involving itself in the provision of service areas on the single carriageway network. The Authority's role in relation to third party developments is set out in the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government document Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).

1.2 Policy Context

1.2.1 European Policy

European policy (summarised in Table 1.1) dictates a need for Member States to provide areas where road users can park, rest and access facilities. There is a strong emphasis on servicing the needs of commercial road users indicating the need to treat roads as a workplace and provide road users a safe and suitable environment in which to work.

Table 1.1 European Policy

Policy	Regulation/Directive
Trans-European Transport Networks	Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013
Driving Time and Rest Periods	Regulation (EU) No 561/2006
Road Infrastructure Safety Management	Directive 2008/96/EC
Intelligent Transport Systems	Directive 2010/40/EU

Trans-European Transport Networks

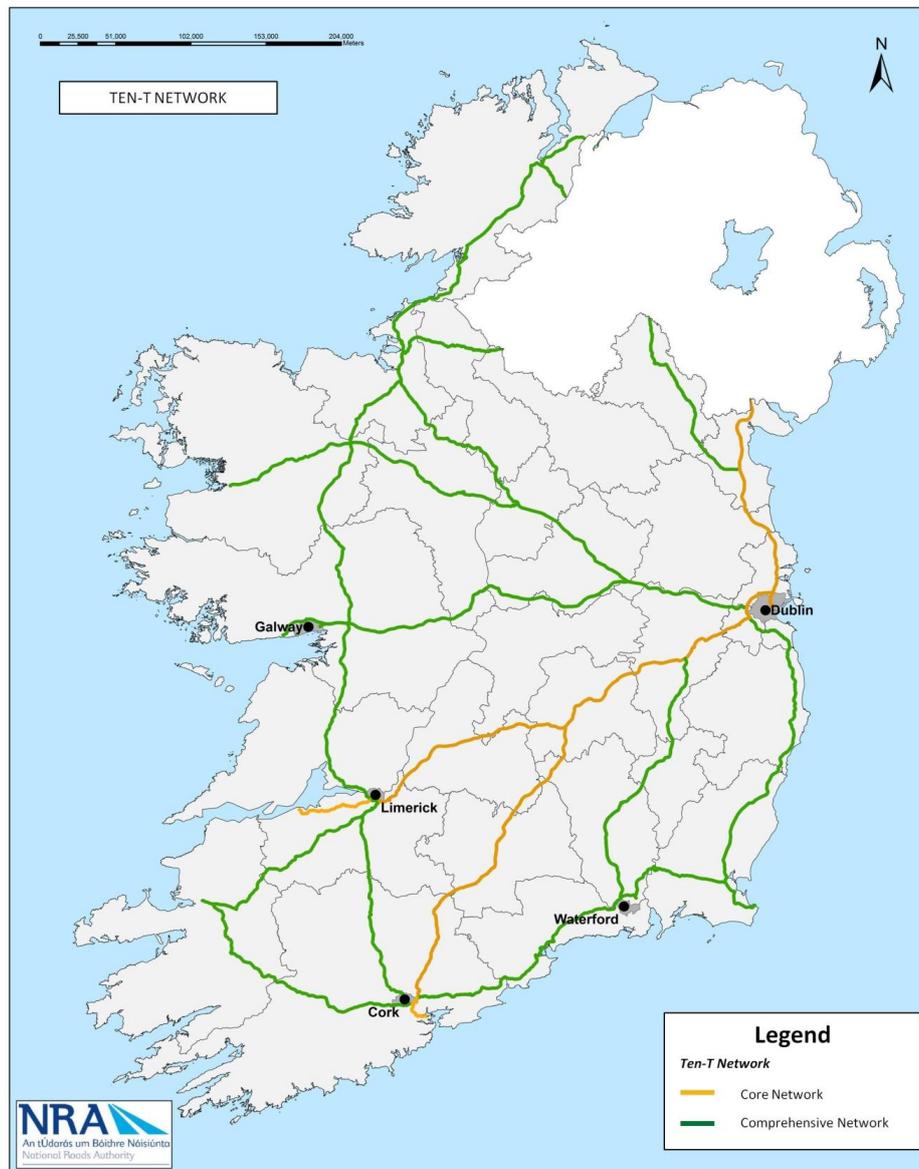
The Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) are a planned set of transport networks across Europe. The TEN-T regulation targets a gradual development of the transport network with the core network a priority (by 2030) followed by the remainder of the comprehensive network (by 2050).

In Ireland, the core network currently consists of the route from Northern Ireland via Dublin to both Cork/Ringaskiddy and Limerick/Foynes. The entire TEN-T network is shown in Figure 1.1.

The TEN-T regulation defines the objective of increasing the benefits for road users by ensuring safe, secure and high-quality standards for road users and freight transport.

The regulation includes the need to provide appropriate parking spaces for commercial users and, on the core network, the development of rest areas approximately every 100 km in line with the needs of road users.

Figure 1.1 Map of TEN-T Road Network



Driving Time and Rest Periods

The purpose of the Driving Time and Rest Periods Regulation is to improve working conditions for drivers and road safety for all road users.

The regulation defines a need for drivers to break for 45 minutes after every four and a half hours driving. In addition, drivers must take daily rest periods and weekly rest periods. Drivers are permitted to take daily and reduced weekly rest periods in their vehicles.

Road Infrastructure Safety Management

The Road Infrastructure Safety Management Directive stipulates that when a road safety impact assessment is being carried out for infrastructure projects, the presence of a sufficient number of safe parking areas must be taken into account.

Intelligent Transport Systems

The Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Directive will set the need to use technology to enhance transport across the EU including the need to provide information and booking of safe and secure parking for commercial vehicles.

1.2.2 National Policy

Road Safety Strategy

The Road Safety Strategy targets a significant reduction in the number of road collision fatalities on Irish roads by 2020. The strategy highlights the increasing recognition of the effects of fatigue and sleepiness on driver performance, noting:

“Although published estimates vary, sleep-related crashes may account for 15-20% of all road traffic collisions”

The strategy sets out an action plan for 2013 to 2020. This includes education, engineering, enforcement and research measures. There is an engineering measure (item 56) which deals specifically with service areas:

“The provision of at least 5 new service areas on or immediately adjacent to the motorway network by 2020”



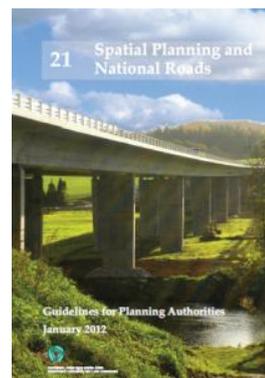
The strategy does not specify the locations for service areas on the motorway network.

Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines

The Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities set out planning policy considerations relating to development affecting national roads (including motorways, national primary and national secondary roads) outside the 50/60 km per hour speed limit zones for cities, towns and villages.

Section 2.8 of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines distinguishes between three different types of service area/facility:

- On-line Motorway Service Areas
- Off-line Motorway Service Areas at National Road Junctions
- Roadside Service Facilities at Non-Motorway National Roads and Junctions



The guidelines outline the leading role of the Authority and relevant local authority in the provision of on-line motorway service areas.

The guidelines advocate the requirement for a forward planning approach to the provision of private sector off-line service areas with reference to the requirements and advice included in the most up-to-date Authority guidance on the location and layout of the Authority's service areas and also similar type existing or planned privately promoted service facilities within existing towns/settlements and located in the general environs of the relevant road corridor.

In order to avoid a proliferation of service areas, the need for a coordinated approach between planning authorities in consultation with the Authority as part of the drafting of development plans is advocated.

The guidelines stipulate that facilities included in service areas should be of a type that avoids the attraction of short, local trips or the locations becoming destinations for local customers.

1.3 Needs of Road Users

The needs of all road users must be addressed in the design and location of service areas. These include commercial drivers, commuters, other drivers, passengers (in cars and buses) and tourists.

In addition to meeting the mandatory requirements defined by European and national policy, it is important to consider the safety and social needs of road users.

Of particular importance is the reduction in the number of fatigue related accidents. The Road Safety Authority (RSA) has carried out a programme of research on the behaviour and attitudes of Irish drivers in 2013. This allows the driver behaviour to be measured at specific points in time and an understanding of trends over time to be established.

The most recent evidence indicates:

- One in five drive between two and three hours without taking a break;
- The average journey length without taking a break has trended downwards year on year;
- One in ten have fallen asleep while driving (similar to previous studies);
- Those driving light commercial vehicles are twice as likely to fall asleep;
- One in five have been significantly affected (“worryingly so”) by a lack of concentration when driving;
- The proportion of those who take the correct course of action when sleepy (take a nap/have a coffee) has dropped significantly

The provision of areas allowing drivers to park and rest at regular intervals along the dual carriageway network will be a key contributor to the reduction in fatigue related accidents.

The key needs of road users to be addressed by service areas include:

- Areas for commercial vehicles to park allowing drivers take their mandatory break and rest periods (including overnight parking);
- Areas for all road users to park and rest in order to reduce fatigue;
- Access to facilities for road users including:
 - fuel stations
 - toilets
 - showers
 - convenience shops
 - restaurant/food outlets
 - tourist information
 - play areas for children

Once in place, service areas will need to continuously develop in order to meet the evolving needs of road users. Future needs are likely to include parking areas with enhanced security and the ability for advance booking of safe and secure parking for commercial vehicles.

1.4 Issues for Planning and Road Authorities

The Authority has no development or operational role in relation to private sector facilities in the vicinity of the national road network, even though the developments in question might include services for motorists. The Authority does, however have a role to play as part of the planning process, and in this regard attention is directed to the Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012)

As already outlined, Section 2.8 of the guidelines refers to the provision of on-line and off-line motorway service areas at national road junctions. Under the guidelines, facilities proposed for inclusion in all service areas should be of a type that avoids the attraction of short, local trips, a class of traffic that is inconsistent with the primary intended role for national roads and associated junctions in catering for strategic long-distance inter-urban and inter-regional traffic. Furthermore, to permit a service area to become a destination for local customers would be contrary to Government planning policy on retail and town centres as set out in Retail Planning Guidelines (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012).

With respect to on-line service areas which the Authority is directly involved in securing, in accordance with the provisions of the Roads Act 1993, as amended, the guidelines outline that the intention to provide these on-line service areas should be catered for in relevant development plans.

The Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities clearly indicate that a proliferation of off-line service area facilities at national road junctions should be avoided.

To address this requirement, the guidelines advise that local authorities in the preparation of their plans, may consider policies for the provision for off-line service areas with reference to the requirements and advice included in the most up-to-date Authority guidance on the location and layout of the Authority's service areas in addition to existing or planned privately promoted service facilities within towns/settlements and located in the general environs of the relevant road corridor. It is therefore important that a coordinated approach between planning authorities should be undertaken in consultation with the Authority as part of the drafting of development plans.

This Service Area Policy forms a basis for the preparation of relevant development plan policies and objectives for discussion between planning authorities and the Authority.

Planning and Road Authorities should be aware that the requirement that, in due course, all of the TEN-T routes must have appropriate parking facilities does not diminish the thrust of State policy against the addition of new access points, or intensification of use at existing access points, on national roads. The requirements of the TEN-T regulations can be satisfied in a manner that is fully consistent with State policies as they relate to road safety and protection of the asset value.

The provision of off-line service areas would not be considered to be exceptional circumstances as included in section 2.6 of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines.

2 Facilities

2.1 Types of On-Line Service Areas

Two types of on-line service areas are envisaged, namely **Type 1** and **Type 2** Service Areas

A Type 1 Service Area (full service area) will be

a large scale service area providing an amenity building (including a convenience shop, restaurant, washrooms and tourist information), fuel facilities, parking and picnic area

A Type 2 Service Area (rest area) will be

a small scale service area providing parking, picnic and toilet facilities, but without a main amenity building or fuel facilities

Service areas should serve traffic travelling in both directions on the roadway. This can be done by locating separate facilities on either side of the roadway or locating one facility accessible from both directions e.g. by a bridge. Facilities located on either side of the roadway are not required to be directly opposite each other.

The review of existing network identifies a need for Type 1 service areas primarily, but it is envisaged that Type 2 service areas will be more widely used as the dual carriageway network expands.

The Authority has previously constructed a number of lay-bys on the dual carriageway network, primarily intended as Garda enforcement areas, though in the absence of proper service areas many are open to public use. These lay-bys allow traffic to pull in off the main carriageway, but there are no facilities located in the areas and parking spaces are severely limited. It is not permitted for road users to exit their vehicles at these lay-bys. As such the lay-bys provide a limited service to road users.

These lay-bys will be withdrawn from general public use, though some may continue in use as Garda enforcement areas.

2.2 Design Standards for Service Areas

The Authority publishes design standards for on-line service areas. These standards are regularly reviewed and updated¹. It is expected that these standards will be further updated to reflect this policy and submissions received as part of the consultation process.

The scale of individual service areas will vary based on traffic volumes and local factors. An example of local factors would be the need for increased levels of Heavy Commercial Vehicle (HCV) parking at service areas near ports.

Access and egress to and from on-line service areas will usually be directly from the mainline carriageway. There may be exceptions to this such as where service areas are located at the end of dual carriageways or at the intersection of two dual carriageways. The intention is to ensure that on-line service areas do not become destinations for local customers. Access for staff working in the service area from the single carriageway network may, however, be allowed.

Service areas are expected to continuously develop to meet evolving standards and needs of road users. Examples of such future needs may include:

- Increased parking facilities based on traffic volumes
- The provision of parking with enhanced security for commercial vehicles
- The ability to book safe and secure parking in advance in line with the ITS Directive
- Increased levels of facilities in order to comply with future European and National policies

The Authority does not prescribe standards for developments which are not part of national roads, such as off-line service areas, though planning authorities and road authorities may of course have regard for National Road standards.

3 Locations

3.1 Spacing of Service Areas

It is proposed to meet the needs of road users through a combination of Type 1 Service Areas (full service areas) and Type 2 Service Areas (rest areas).

This policy targets the provision of Type 1 Service Areas at least every 100 km on the dual carriageway network. In practice, that requires the spacing to be less than 100 km in most cases. In addition, where the gap between Type 1 Service Areas is in excess of 85 km, a Type 2 Service area should be provided.

The spacing set out above has been set based on a combination of European and national policy, international research, analysis of the road network in Ireland and submissions received as part of the public consultation process.

3.2 Existing On-Line Service Area Locations

There are Type 1 Service Areas either open, under construction, or at tender at six locations, as follows:

- Lusk on the M1
- Castlebellingham on the M1
- Enfield on the M4
- Athlone on the M6
- Kilcullen on the M9
- Gorey on the M11

There are no Type 2 Service Areas at present.

¹ NRA TA 70/14 (June 2014), Volume 6, Section 3, Part 3, NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges

3.3 Proposed Service Area Locations

3.3.1 New Dual Carriageways/Upgrades

There are three major dual carriageway schemes active in planning at present, which are Cork City to Ringaskiddy, Limerick to Foynes, and the Galway City bypass. It is envisaged that both the Ringaskiddy and Foynes schemes will include Type 1 service areas, and the details and precise locations will be developed as part of the schemes development. It is not envisaged that any service areas will be included on the Galway bypass scheme, in light of the planned service area where the M6 crosses the M17/18.

The EU TEN-T regulations require the Authority to upgrade much of the National Road network. It is almost certain that the required upgrades to the N7 Dublin-Naas dual carriageway and the northern end of the N11 will include on-line service area provision. The decision as to which type of service area is to be provided will be decided when the upgrades are being planned.

Other dual carriageway schemes will also include service areas as an integral part of the roads, with the decisions as to what types and where to locate them being made at that time when the schemes are being planned. An example of this would be the M20 from Cork to Limerick, which will include service area provision as an integral part of the scheme.

3.3.2 Existing Dual Carriageway network

The needs for service areas on the existing dual carriageway network can be seen in Figure 3.1, below, and are outlined in more detail in Tables 3.1 to 3.10 below.

The policy preference is for on-line service areas, having regard for public convenience, control over the quality, extent and nature of services to be provided, and the ability of the Authority to respond to emerging law, such as the ITS Directive and the TEN-T Regulations.

Existing Off-Line Facilities

A number of off-line facilities already exist, or are advanced in construction or planning in close proximity to the dual carriageway network. The Authority considers that the policy should recognise those off-line facilities that provide extensive services and fulfil certain criteria namely; include a appropriate level of provision parking for cars and Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCVs), be located within a few hundred metres of the dual carriageway, remain open for 24 hours, and permit commercial vehicles to park for longer periods including overnight thus allowing drivers to take break and rest periods.

There are existing facilities that meet these criteria, at:

- Mayfield (Junction 14) on the M7 and
- Moneygall (Junction 23) on the M7.

The Authority does not envisage providing on-line service areas in their vicinity, at least not in the short or medium term. If we take it that the provision of on-line service areas in their vicinity will be considered again in 2019, allowing for planning and construction it is unlikely that the Authority will open any Service Area in their vicinity before 2022, at earliest.

A number of off-line facilities which have planning approval, are at construction or already in operation may meet or could be upgraded to meet the criteria above. These include developments at:

- Birdhill (Junction 27) on the M7
- The combination of an existing off-line service area at Cashel (Junction 8) and a planned service area at Ballacolla (Junction 3) which has planning approval on the M8

Other locations where future off-line facilities could meet the criteria are as follows:

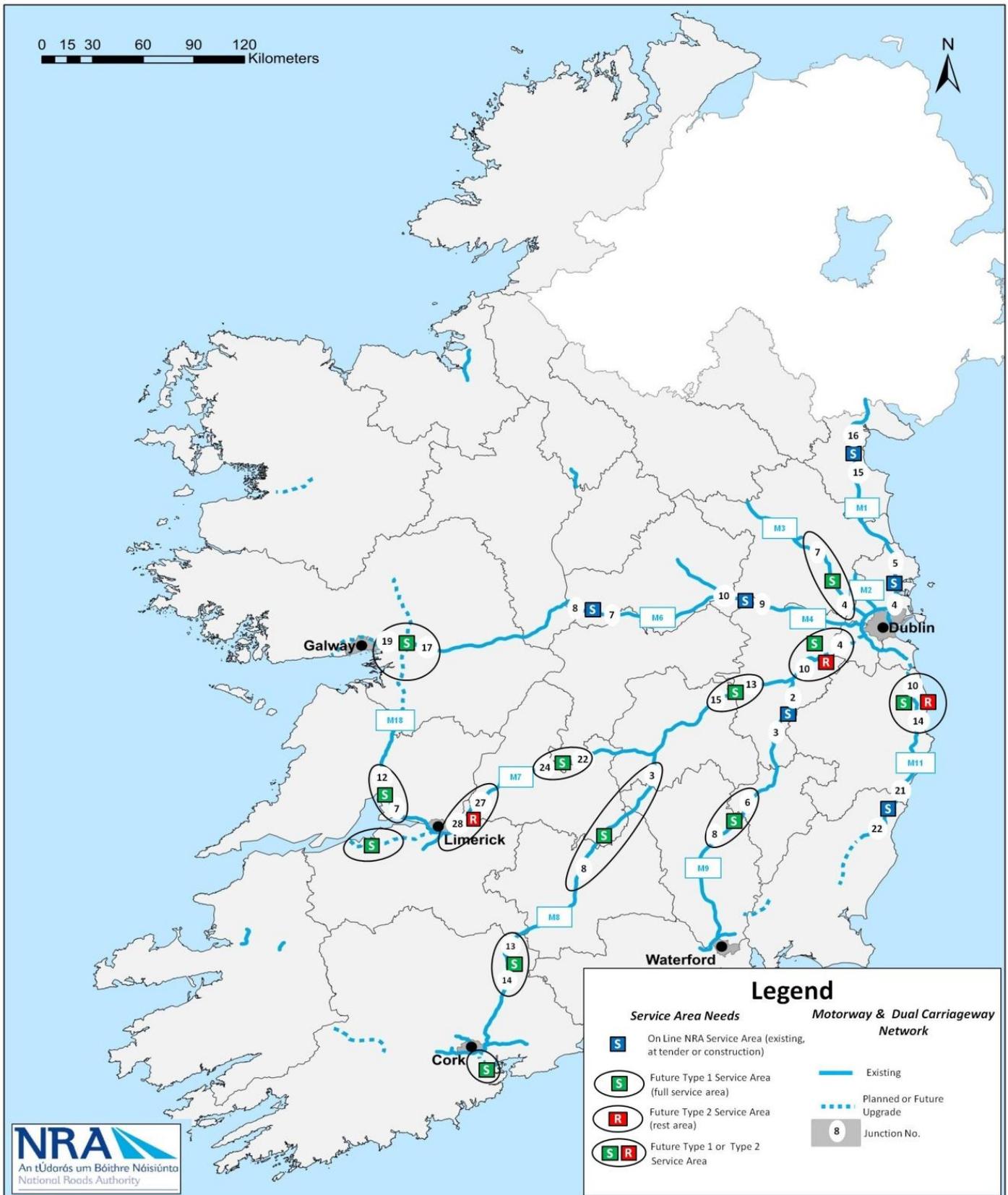
- Mitchelstown to Fermoy (Junction 13 to Junction 14) on the M8
- Carlow South to Kilkenny (Junction 6 to Junction 8) on the M9

Any decision to advance these service areas is a matter for the developers, and any decision to approve them is a matter for the planning authorities. The Authority is not advocating or opposing their development, but to the extent that these service areas are developed and fulfil the criteria noted above, the Authority does not envisage providing on-line service areas in their vicinity, at least not in the short or medium term. If we take it that the provision of on-line service areas in their vicinity will be considered again in 2019, allowing for planning and construction it is unlikely that the Authority will open any Service Area in their vicinity before 2022, at earliest.

The Authority is aware that there are many other facilities for roads users available close to the dual carriageway network. These facilities are a welcome provision of services to road users, but do not fulfil the criteria above.

The Authority will provide on-line service areas at the remaining locations identified on the existing dual carriageway network. While that doesn't preclude future developments off-line at these locations, subject to approval by the planning authorities, such off-line facilities will not be considered as an alternative to the Authority's on-line service areas.

Figure 3.1 Service Area Needs



3.4 Service Area Needs by Route

M1 Dublin to Belfast

Table 3.1 M1 Dublin to Belfast Route

Location	Junction	Type	Approximate Distance from Previous (km)
Dublin	-	Start	-
Lusk	4-5	Existing Type 1 Service Area	15
Castlebellingham	15-16	Existing Type 1 Service Area	50
Border	-	End	25

The route from Dublin to Belfast is well served by two Type 1 Service Areas. No additional service areas are proposed for this route.

M2 Dublin to Ashbourne

Table 3.2 M2 Dublin to Ashbourne Route

Location	Junction	Type	Approximate Distance from Previous (km)
Dublin	-	Start	-
Ashbourne	3	End	20

The route from Dublin to Ashbourne is relatively short and does not warrant the provision of a service area.

M3 Dublin to Kells

Table 3.3 M3 Dublin to Kells Route

Location	Junction	Type	Approximate Distance from Previous (km)
Dublin	-	Start	-
Clonee-Blundelstown	4-7	Proposed Type 1 Service Area	5-30
Kells	10	End	25-50

A Type 1 Service Area is proposed for the route from Dublin to Kells. The section identified is from Junction 4 (Clonee) to Junction 7 (Blundelstown). Given the complexity of location choice, and the M3 PPP, the Authority, in consultation with Meath County Council, will lead its development.

M4/M6 Dublin to Galway*Table 3.4 M4/M6 Dublin to Galway Route*

Location	Junction	Type	Approximate Distance from Previous (km)
Dublin	-	Start	-
Enfield	9-10 (M4)	Existing Type 1 Service Area	35
Athlone	7-8 (M6)	Type 1 Service Area (Tender Stage)	70
M6/M17/M18	18 (M6)	Proposed Type 1 Service Area	80
Galway	-	End	15

The route from Dublin to Galway already includes two Type 1 Service Areas (one existing and one at tender stage).

An additional Type 1 Service Area is proposed for the route. The optimum location proposed for this service area is the junction of the M6/M17/M18. This Type 1 Service Area would serve both the M6 and M17/M18 routes.

Given the proposed location at the junction of the M17/M18 and the M6 is not accessible from the any routes other than two PPP motorway schemes, the Authority in consultation with Galway County Council, will lead its development.

M7/N21/N69 Dublin to Limerick/Foynes*Table 3.5 M7/N21/N69 Dublin to Limerick/Foynes Route*

Location	Junction	Type	Approximate Distance from Previous (km)
Dublin	-	Start	-
Rathcoole-Naas North	4-9 (M7)	Proposed Type 1 or Type 2 Service Area	10-20
Mayfield	14 (M7)	Type 1 Service Area	30-40
Moneygall	23 (M7)	Type 1 Service Area	80
Birdhill-Castletroy	27-28 (M7)	Type 2 Service Area	35-50
Foynes vicinity	(N21/N69)	Proposed Type 1 Service Area	TBD

A Type 1 or Type 2 Service Area is proposed for the section of N7 from Junction 4 (Rathcoole) to Junction 9 (Naas North). This is a section of roadway which the Authority is required to upgrade because of TEN-T regulations in the coming years. The Authority will include appropriate on-line service area provision when planning this upgrade.

The position at Mayfield, Moneygall, and Birdhill-Castletroy is addressed in Section 3.3.2 above.

A Type 1 Service Area is proposed for the Limerick to Foynes route. This may be near the port in Foynes, but depending on how the scheme evolves may be some distance from the port. Limerick County Council, in consultation with the Authority, will include consideration of the appropriate location for this service area as part of the scheme planning, currently underway.

M7/M8/N28 Dublin to Cork/Ringaskiddy

Table 3.6 M7/M8/N28 Dublin to Cork/Ringaskiddy Route

Location	Junction	Type	Approximate Distance from Previous (km)
Dublin	-	Start	-
Rathcoole-Naas North	4-9 (M7)	Proposed Type 1 or Type 2 Service Area	10-20
Mayfield	14 (M7)	Type 1 Service Area	30-40
Ballacolla-Cashel	3-8 (M8)	Proposed Type 1 Service Area	50-100
Mitchelstown-Fermoy	13-14 (M8)	Proposed Type 1 Service Area	45-105
Ringaskiddy	(N28)	Proposed Type 1 Service Area	TBD

The M7 section of this route is discussed above.

The position as regards Mayfield, Ballacolla-Cashel and Mitchelstown-Fermoy is discussed in Section 3.3.2 above.

A Type 1 Service Area is proposed for the N28 from Cork to Ringaskiddy. Cork County Council, in consultation with the Authority, will include consideration of the appropriate location of this service area as part of the scheme planning, currently underway.

M7/M9 Dublin to Waterford

Table 3.7 M9 Dublin to Waterford Route

Location	Junction	Type	Approximate Distance from Previous (km)
Dublin	-	Start	-
Rathcoole-Naas North	4-9 (M7)	Proposed Type 1 or Type 2 Service Area	10-20
Kilcullen	2-3 (M9)	Type 1 Service Area (Tender Stage)	25-35
Carlow South-Kilkenny	6-8 (M9)	Proposed Type 1 Service Area	40-60
Waterford	-	End	45-65

The M7 section of this route is discussed above. The route from the M7 junction to Waterford includes a Type 1 Service Area which is at advance works construction and tender stage between Junction 2 and Junction 3 (Kilcullen).

The position as regards Carlow South-Kilkenny is discussed in Section 3.3.2 above.

M11 Dublin to Rosslare

Table 3.8 M11 Dublin to Rosslare Route

Location	Junction	Type	Approximate Distance from Previous (km)
Dublin	-	Start	-
Delgany-Cullenmore	10-14	Proposed Type 1 or Type 2 Service Area	10-25
Gorey	21-22	Type 1 Service Area (Construction)	35-50
Enniscorthy	-	End	40

The M11 route from the Dublin to Rosslare includes a Type 1 Service Area which is at construction stage (Gorey).

A Type 1 or Type 2 Service Area is proposed for the section of N11 from Delgany to Cullenmore. This is a section of roadway which the Authority is required to upgrade because of TEN-T regulations in the coming years. The Authority will include appropriate on-line service area provision when planning this upgrade.

The Authority will include consideration of additional service areas as an integral part of any future dual carriageway scheme when planning the development of this route south of Enniscorthy.

M17/18 Limerick to Tuam

Table 3.9 M17/M18 Limerick to Tuam Route

Location	Junction	Type	Approximate Distance from Previous (km)
Limerick	-	Start	-
Sixmilebridge-Ennis	7-12	Proposed Type 1 Service Area	15-30
M6/M17/M18	18 (M6)	Proposed Type 1 Service Area	55-70
Tuam	-	End	30

There are currently no service areas on the route from Limerick to Gort, or on the section from Gort to Tuam that is currently under construction. Two Type 1 Service Areas are proposed for this route.

The service area proposed at the junction of the M6/M17/M18 will serve both the M6 and M17/M18 routes as discussed above. These are PPPs, and the Authority, in consultation with Galway Co Council, will lead its development.

A Type 1 Service Area is also proposed for the section between Sixmilebridge and Ennis. The location of this service area will require particular consideration due to the complexity of this section of the route and the Authority, in consultation with Clare County Council, will lead its development.

Summary

Table 3.10 Summary of Service Area Needs

Category	Num	Locations
NRA Type 1 Service Areas Delivered / construction / tender	6	Lusk (M1) Castlebellingham (M1) Enfield (M4) Athlone (M6) Kilcullen (M9) Gorey (M11)
Off-Line Service Areas Currently meeting the needs of road users	2	Mayfield (M7) Moneygall (M7)
Off-Line Facilities Existing / with planning with potential to meet the needs of road users	2	Birdhill-Castletroy (M7) Ballacolla-Cashel (M8)
Future Off-Line Facilities Potential developments	2	Mitchelstown-Fermoy (M8) Carlow South-Kilkenny (M9)
Future NRA Type 1 Service Areas	5	Clonee-Blundelstown (M3) M6/M17/M18 Sixmilebridge-Ennis (M18) Ringaskiddy (N28) Foynes vicinity (N21/N69)
Future Type 1 or Type 2 Service Areas To be decided as part of road upgrade planning	2	Rathcoole-Naas North (M7) Delgany-Cullenmore (M11)

3.5 Detailed Locations

This policy proposes the general spacing and approximate locations in which service areas should be provided. It does not identify specific sites or detailed locations.

Based on experience in the development of service areas to date, identifying suitable sites is a particular problem. There is a need to construct access/slip roads from the mainline route (for on-line service areas) and the need for large flat areas for parking. Due to the complexity of site selection, this policy recognises that there may be a need for flexibility as regards precise site location, and the Authority's design standards will allow a degree of flexibility as regards detail design.

4 Signage & Information

4.1 Signage to Service Areas

The Authority will provide signage for all on-line service areas. The signage at these locations will be provided in a similar manner to the Advance Directional signage provided for grade-separated junctions. In addition to this, signage indicating the fuel prices will be installed in advance of the entrance to the facility, and further advance information signs may be provided as appropriate indicating the distance ahead to the next Services Area e.g. Next Service Area 70km Ahead.

Signage will also be provided for the off-line facilities referenced in 3.3.2 above, provided the off-line developments meet the specified criteria. This signage will be installed in conjunction with the normal Advance Directional signage for the particular junction and hence will differ from the signage provided for on-line service areas described above. The signage will be installed at positions available between the Advance Directional signs, and Tourist signs where they are present at the particular junction.

There are brown informational signs for many off-line facilities within close proximity to the network that provide services for motorists at present, principally fuel, refreshment and toilet facilities.

4.2 Information

As shown by the Road Safety Authority research on fatigue, there is a need to educate road users on the best ways to combat fatigue. The Authority will work in conjunction with the Road Safety Authority to further educate road users on the benefits of using service areas to combat fatigue. The education of road users is considered a necessary compliment to the development of service areas.

In due course, the Authority will put arrangements in place for advance booking for commercial vehicles, and for enhanced security in its on-line service area in order to comply with EU ITS requirements in this regard.

The Authority will liaise with relevant bodies, including commercial and tourist information providers, to ensure the service areas are publicised. The Authority will also investigate the use of technology to provide greater levels of information to road users via the Authority website and by other means. This information will be particularly useful for tourists and commercial drivers coming to Ireland from other countries

5 Delivery of Service Areas

5.1 On-Line Service Areas

The Authority, together with local authorities, is responsible for the delivery of on-line service areas, whether as an integral part of new roads or as upgrades to existing roads. Consequently the Authority or local authorities will be responsible for scheme planning and development, for obtaining statutory approvals, and will own the service areas.

The decisions as to what on-line service areas to build, what facilities to include, and so on, are decided on a public interest basis, rather than to maximise financial returns. Nonetheless, once those decisions are made it is the Authority's objective to obtain best value for money, and to maximise the economic value for the public.

To these ends, it is the policy of the Authority to outsource all construction to the private sector, and that policy will apply to service areas. It has also been the policy to date to outsource the maintenance and operation of service areas, and that policy will continue to apply also.

While PPPs are being used for the six service areas developed or at tender to date, there is no decision as yet as to what structure to use for future outsourcing.

The priorities for the Authority for the existing network are, in descending order:

- Complete the procurement process for the three service areas at tender;
- Provide a Service Area at the M6/M17/M18 junction;
- Provide Service Areas on the M3 (Clonee-Blundelstown), and on the M18 (Sixmilebridge-Ennis).
- Provide Service areas at the locations noted in 3.3.2 above if the anticipated off-line developments have not emerged.

Delivery is likely to be as follows:

The three service areas at tender are likely to open in 2015, 2016 and possibly 2017.

The Service Area at the M6/M17/18 junction will open in or about the same time the M17/18 construction i.e. by 2018.

Planning for the other service areas on the existing network will commence immediately, with the construction dates to be decided.

The prioritisation of new road schemes falls outside of this policy, but in general it is intended that the service areas on new schemes will open as the new roads open to traffic.

5.2 Off-Line Service Areas

Except for the statutory consultee role described in section 1.4, the Authority has no role in determining how off-line developments should be delivered.

6 Summary

This policy covers the provision of service areas on the national road network. It identifies locations for service areas on sections of the existing dual carriageway roads in Ireland.

The key provisions of this policy are as follows:

- Areas that allow road users to park and rest on long journeys are necessary for road safety and to cater for the needs of road users
- Type 1 Service Areas are to be provided approximately every 100 km
- Provision of Type 2 Service Areas (rest areas) as infill where the gap between Type 1 Service Areas is in excess of 85 km.
- Type 1 Service Areas or Type 2 Service Areas will be developed as an integral part of future road schemes where appropriate
- Service areas will be provided as part of upgrades to existing national roads, if required and with consideration to the provision on adjacent sections of the network.

There is a requirement for a Total of 19 services area on the national road dual carriageway network (including motorways).

There are Type 1 Service Areas open, under construction, or at tender at six locations, as follows:

- Lusk (J4 to J5) on the M1
- Castlebellingham (J15 to J16) on the M1
- Enfield (J9 to J10) on the M4
- Athlone (J7 to J8) on the M6
- Kilcullen (J2 to J3) on the M9
- Gorey (J21 to J22) on the M11

The Authority proposes to lead the development of five Type 1 service areas at the following locations:

- M6/M18/M17 Junction
- Clonee to Blundelstown (J4 to J7) on the M3
- Sixmilebridge to Ennis (J7 to J12) on the M18
- N21/N69 Port of Foynes
- N28 Port of Ringaskiddy

The Authority will include on-line service areas as an integral part of future dual carriageway road schemes. Two locations have been identified so far:

- Rathcoole to Naas North (J4 to J9) on the N7
- Delgany to Cullenmore (J10 to J14) on the N11

There is recognition that two off-line facilities currently fulfil the criteria outlined in Section 3.3.2, namely:

- Mayfield (J14) on the M7
- Moneygall (J23) on the M7

The following four locations of existing or future off-line service areas could fulfil the criteria outlined in 3.3.2 namely:

- Birdhill to Castletroy (J27 to J28) on the M7
- Ballacolla to Cashel (J3 to J8) on the M8
- Mitchelstown to Fermoy (J13 to J14) on the M8
- Carlow South to Kilkenny (J6 to J8) on the M9