Strabane baseline – transport and access

From consultation

Public Transport
- The town has 110 registered taxi's which have dominated the town with congestion forming at Abercorn Square and on Main Street and new proposals are needed to resolve the this situation. In addition buses are forced to perform a u-turn at the Castle Place/Market Street junction. (Council officers)
- The bus centre should be located at Canal Street as a central location within the core of the shopping district. (chamber of Commerce)

Pedestrian Bridges (from Council officers)
- Two Pedestrian Bridges are planned to cross the Mourne River however DSD funding of £500,000 has been secured for the bridge located at Melvin Road and no funding has been found for the second bridge to the South West. It had originally been envisaged that DSD and DRD would fund a bridge each with a cost per bridge of £1.5m.

- The bridges are important to the housing estates on the West and East banks as they offer a more direct route into the town and for students to access the new Holy Cross High School.

Initial reactions
- Discussion of sites and possible uses does not refer to accessibility. Development away from the town centre cannot be served by bus, and also will divert both investment and people away from the town centre.
- Policy needs to be revised to prevent further out of centre trip-attracting development. Otherwise trying to revitalise the town centre will be like pushing water uphill with a rake.

A parking strategy is needed for Strabane.
- This should include parking at out of centre locations as well as the town centre, in order to redress the competitive advantage. However, the horse has probably bolted as far as this is concerned.
- A parking strategy would require data, which we don't have (?), but the principles could be established.
- Taxis need to be dealt with so that they do not compete for space at the bus stop in Abercorn square.
- Some surface parking areas seem to make a poor contribution to the town centre. Relocation of some parking could release opportunities to create high quality public spaces.

Bus services
Bus services in the town consist of town services (four routes linking the town centre and residential areas) and inter-town services.
- **Town services** consist of 4 x 398 routes focusing on Abercorn square and Canal Street

- **Inter-town services**. A "bus centre" is situated out of the town centre on the "wrong" side of the river. This is poorly provided alongside a bus depot. It is not easily accessible except by car. This defeats the object of the facility for the majority of existing bus uses who (almost by definition) do not have a car.
- One town route (D) runs to the bus centre, but only once an hour, and not coordinated with bus departures. People arriving at the bus centre from out of town have a very poor service on this one way loop, which takes 20 minutes to reach the town centre after wandering through the western suburbs of the town.
- The full list of inter-town services calling at the bus centre is not known, other than observing the timetables displayed at the bus centre. No online map can be found.
- There are direct services to Belfast and Dublin, plus more local services such as to Castlederg and Sion Mills. However, none of these is very frequent.
- The timetables displayed at the bus centre do not include, any service to Londonderry, although services to "Foyle Street" are displayed. How is one supposed to know that Foyle Street is in Londonderry, or even, as a visitor to northern Ireland, that Derry is Londonderry?.

Traffic
- Comments from consultation are made about traffic congestion in the town centre. We would judge congestion to be probably the least important of the issues facing the town centre.
- The volumes of traffic in the town centre are not huge, although because of the way traffic and parking is managed, it does seem to cause disproportionate nuisance to people on foot and to the quality of the environment.