

Transport Infrastructure Ireland

# Louth Park and Share

## Pilot and Trial Ex-Post Evaluation

### April 2026



## Executive Summary

The Louth Park & Share (P&S) facility at M1 Junction 16 has proven highly effective in addressing unsafe roadside parking on adjacent roads and is supporting car sharing while maintaining safe and efficient roads.

Opened in 2021, the facility provides 226 spaces and has successfully attracted both existing and new car-sharing users, particularly commuters travelling long distances to Dublin.

User surveys show that the facility is highly used, mainly by Northern Ireland-based commuters travelling five days a week. The P&S facility removed the roadside parking observed on the N53, N33 and R215 (previously the N52), has attracted new car sharing users, and it is preventing some 200 single occupancy vehicles entering Dublin each day.

Users report strong satisfaction with safety, convenience, and cost savings, though they consistently state they would not use the facility if parking fees were introduced.

81% of those surveyed said that there is “No Change” required to the existing P&S facility.

Stakeholder feedback highlights recurring issues with litter, pressure on capacity, and the need for improved user comfort such as shelter and extended set-down areas.

The evaluation concludes that the facility has delivered significant safety, environmental, and user-experience benefits.

Demand and the catchment area is wider than originally anticipated, indicating strong potential for additional P&S sites along the M1 corridor and other national routes.

Key recommendations include expanding capacity, enhancing maintenance regimes, improving user amenities, avoiding parking charges, and progressing further P&S facilities to maximise safety and decarbonisation benefits.





## Introduction

In 2021, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), together with Louth County Council, delivered Ireland's first purpose-built Park and Share (P&S) facility on the Irish motorway network, located off Junction 16 (formerly N52 Junction), M1 near Dundalk South, County Louth.

This document provides an ex-post evaluation of the P&S Facility pilot and trial. It addresses observed roadside parking adjacent to the M1 junctions and mitigates hazardous informal parking along hard-shoulders along the N33, N53, and R215. The scheme was developed to provide a safe, dedicated parking area for commuters who wish to car-share or connect with bus services.

The facility provides 226 parking spaces, including 22 disabled spaces, electric vehicle (EV) charging spaces, lighting, CCTV surveillance, pedestrian footpaths, a set-down area, bus turning area, directional signage and a junction off the R215.

The need for the scheme was identified by the TII Road Safety Inspection Program as part of the road safety initiatives of the EU Road Infrastructure Safety Management Directive. It was opened to the public in 2021 and was funded as part of the Road Safety Improvement Program.

Delivered in partnership with Louth County Council, TII funded and initiated the €1.5 million investment. It improves road safety and supports sustainable travel through car-sharing. The facility can also accommodate future bus public transport services.



In 2023, TII carried out intercept, postal surveys and stakeholder interviews to capture operator and user experiences and opinions to inform future projects. The following sections discuss the survey results and feedback from facility operators. The final section discusses lessons learned and provides recommendations to inform decision making and subsequent P&S facilities developed as part of the National Roads network.

# P&S User Surveys

## Intercept Survey

Intercept surveys were conducted on-site at the P&S facility and were designed to gather direct user feedback during their journey. The survey was designed to be brief and took place between April and September 2023. Interviewers approached users during peak hours, between 5:30am and 7:30am, to intercept as many users as possible over a five-day period.

56 interviews were conducted and all those interviewed were male, with ages ranges between 20 and 50.

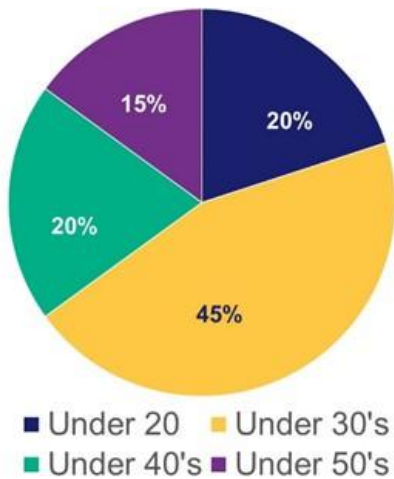


Figure 1. Age profile of surveyed users

The majority of those interviewed use the facility five days a week (86%).

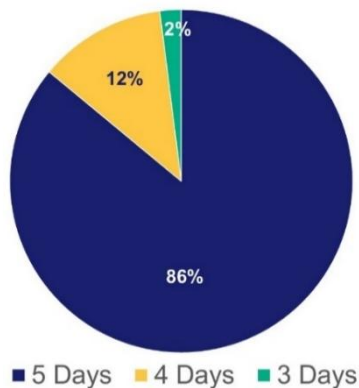


Figure 2. Frequency of weekly use

P&S users typically share cars with one other person (1 passenger), 57%. Almost 40% car share with two or three others, and a small proportion, 7%, car share with over four people (typically, minivan type vehicles).

The majority of users at the P&S are from Northern Ireland (80-85%).

Users from Northern Ireland typically travelled from Newry, Armagh, Downpatrick and Ballynahinch. These locations are between 30 and 80 km away (25min to 1 ¼ hour journey time) from the P&S in Louth.

The other P&S users (15-20%) originated from Dundalk, Carrickmacross and Monaghan.

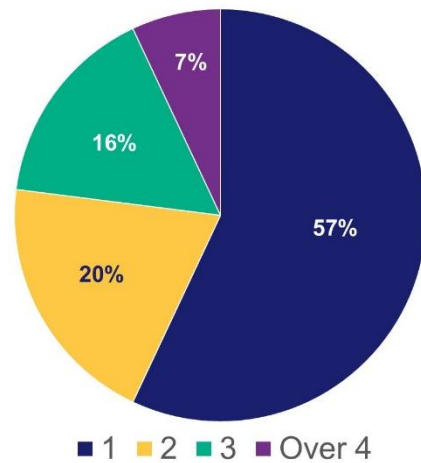
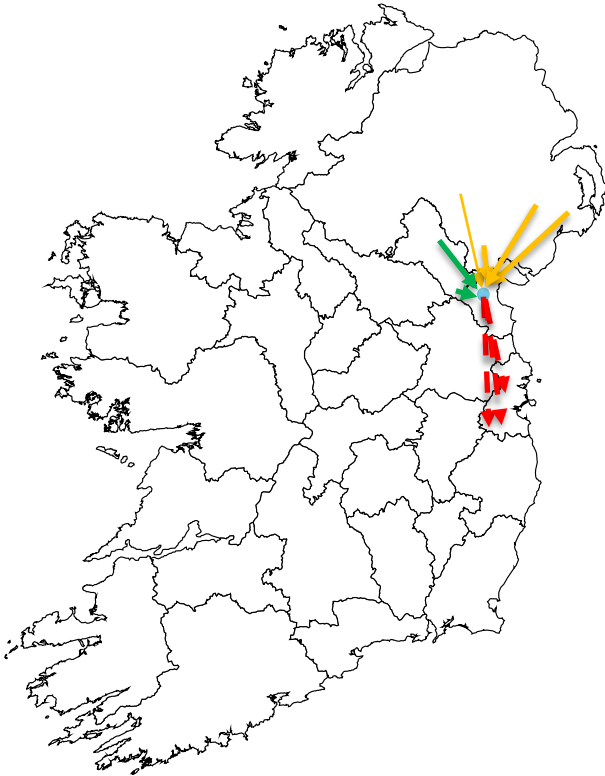


Figure 3. Car-share group size



**Figure 4: Origins of P&S users (Yellow & Green lines) and their main destinations (Red lines)**

The main destination after parking or picking up at the P&S in Louth is Dublin (96%). A small number (4%) travelled to other destinations such as Navan and Portlaoise.

The interview responses also captured the locations in Dublin that P&S users travelled onto, with these including Swords, Clondalkin, Malahide and the city center.

The average car-share trip distance (one-way), based on the interview information, is approximately 75km.

The majority of commuters (86%) use the P&S five days a week. This represents approximately 28,000 vehicle kilometres avoided per day, prevents approximately 200 single occupancy vehicles entering and parking in Dublin, and is equivalent to removing three tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per day from the National Roads network.

Assuming car-sharing passengers make a return journey to the P&S, 150 km per day is avoided by each car parked at the P&S in Louth.

The P&S is used to reduce transport costs and to a lesser extent reduce the number of hours spent driving.

All those interviewed (56) stated that they would not be willing to pay for parking.

Based on the information collected on P&S user origin and destinations, some customers commute three to four hours daily - e.g., Armagh to Dublin city center.

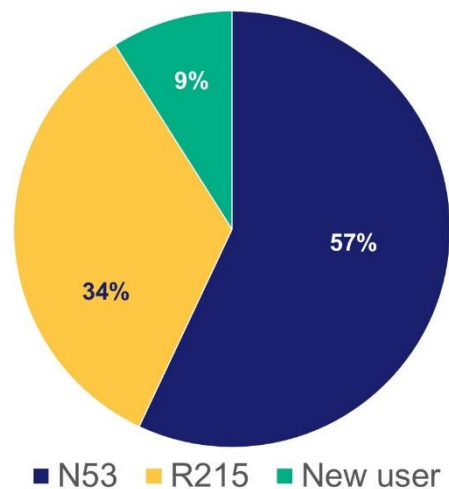
The majority of the P&S users originally parked on the hardshoulder or verge of the N53 or the R215.

This indicated that the P&S facility successfully attracted these users. The P&S also attracted new P&S users (almost 10%).

The users interviewed are satisfied with the P&S facilities, consider the facility to be safe, and find that CCTV gives reassurance that their vehicle is safe at the P&S.

None of those interviewed (56) raised personal safety concerns, however all those interviewed in the intercept survey were male.

Users were asked if they were satisfied with the facility, and all responses (56) were positive.



**Figure 5. Previous parking location of users**

When asked “What would you like to add/change”, the most common answer was “**nothing**”. However, the following suggestions were also noted:

- A coffee station
- A sheltered waiting area
- Extended set-down area to accommodate peak time drop-off/pick-up
- Litter bins
- Another P&S facility on the N53

Users listed three main benefits that the P&S in Louth offered them:

1. Travel cost savings
2. Reduced driving time
3. Environmental impacts

Finally, all customers interviewed (56) stated that they would not use a bus service if one was provided. The reason given for this response was the impracticality of public transport for workers transporting equipment/tools/material by bus.

## Postal Survey

A postal survey aimed to target a wider catchment area around the P&S facility in County Louth to evaluate the awareness of the facility and willingness to use it.

The postal survey was administered using An Post flyer with a QR code to over 55,000 addresses in September 2023 to the following areas in County Louth:

Ardee | Ballybay | Bellowstown | Broomfield | Canningstown | Carlingford | Carrickmacross | Castleblayney | Clones | Clontibret | Collon | Cootehill | Dundalk Urban | Dunleer | Emyvale | Inniskeen | Jenkinstown | Laragh | Latton | Loughmore | Monaghan Town | Newbliss | Omeath | Rockcorry | Scotstown | Shantonagh | Shercock | Smithborough | Tallanstown | Tydavnet

In total 254 responses were received, corresponding to a 0.46% response rate.

The survey revealed that 30% of response currently use the P&S in County Louth.

The survey revealed that the P&S is catering for more than travel for work trip purposes in Louth:

- 1 in 5 car share trips are for leisure purposes.
- 1 in 3 people use the P&S once or twice a week, and a further 31% use it more than twice a week.
- Most people said they commute from Dundalk, Ardee and Monaghan and a large proportion (45%) travel to Dublin.

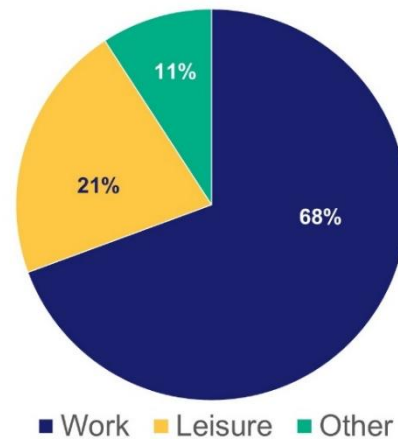


Figure 6: Purpose of car-share journeys (postal survey)

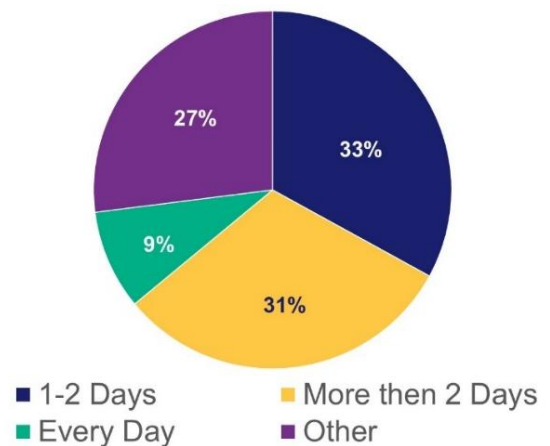
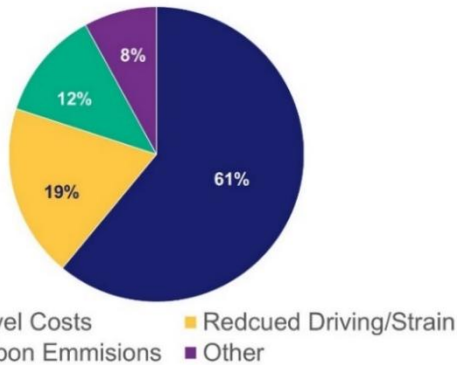


Figure 7: Weekly usage frequency (postal survey)



**Figure 8: Reasons for using P&S (postal survey)**

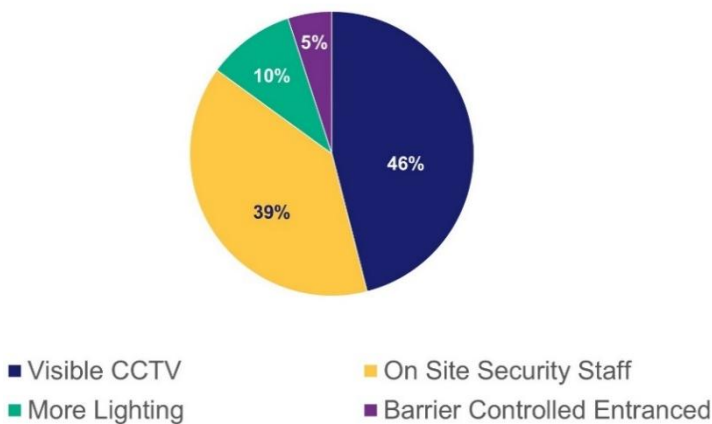
Most people (61%) said they use the P&S to "reduce travel cost." Almost 1 in 5 said their reason for using the P&S was to reduce stress/strain of driving.

When asked if "The Park & Share facility is well signposted and easy to find", more than half (58%) of respondents agreed that it was well sign posted.

The survey respondents suggested a number of ways to improve security at the P&S:

- Visible CCTV (46%),
- On site security staff (36%),
- Increased lighting, and
- Barrier controlled entry.

81% said "**No Change**" was required to the existing P&S facility.

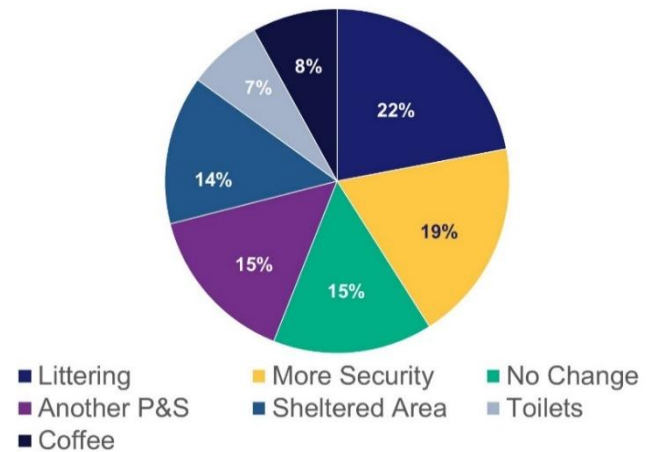


**Figure 9: Security improvement suggestions (postal survey)**

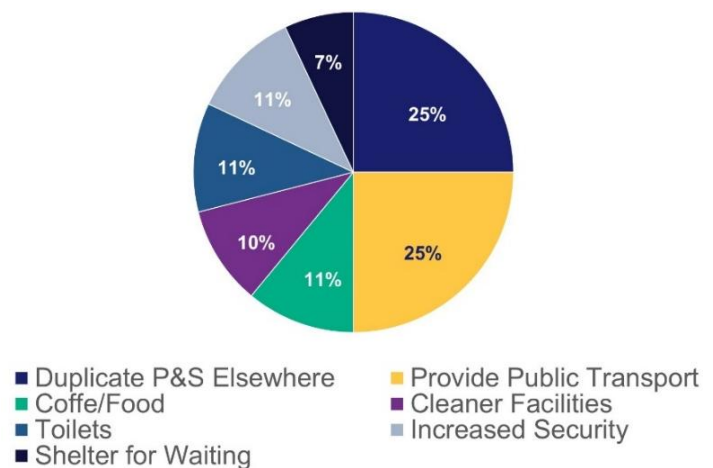
15% suggested providing "more spaces", and a small minority (3%) suggested providing more bus spaces.

Turning to potential improvements, better management of litter was the top improvement requested. Other suggestions included improved security, provision of similar facilities at other locations, and provision of a sheltered area for passengers waiting to be collected.

A larger proportion of respondents (58%) disagreed with the statement "**I would pay for parking at a Park & Share facility**".



**Figure 10: Suggested facility improvements (postal survey)**



**Figure 11: Suggested additional facilities or improvements (postal survey)**



## Public Transport

The P&S in Louth is not currently served by a bus service but was designed to operate as a bus stop in the future if required.

A large number (56%) of respondents indicated that they would use a bus service if it was provided, 22% indicated “maybe”.

When asked to consider a minimum frequency of service that would be acceptable, the following responses were collected:

- 1 hour was the maximum time frequency (41%)
- 30min (42%)
- With the remaining (17%) stating 15min or less frequency.

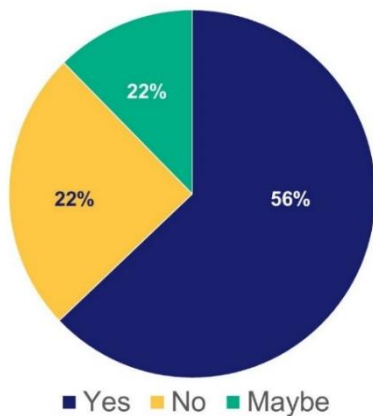


Figure 12: Bus service interest

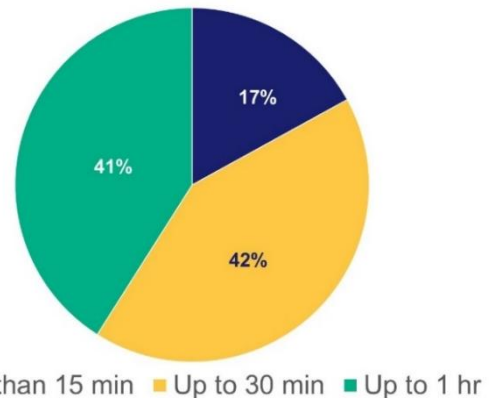


Figure 13: Acceptable bus service frequency

## Stakeholder Feedback

Feedback was sought from Louth County Council (LCC) and TII Motorway Maintenance and Renewals Contracts (MMaRC), the operator that provides maintenance support.

### Louth County Council

A senior engineer from LCC, responsible for delivering the P&S through planning, design and construction, was interviewed to provide Local Authority perspectives.

LCC, similar to the users in the previous section, highlighted their concerns about litter accumulation and acknowledged that litter as a significant issue at the P&S facility. While the provision of bins may be a benefit, LCC has reservations about adding more bins due to the potential for household waste disposal becoming an additional issue.

To enhance road safety on the R215, LCC proposed adding hatching and signage along the hard shoulder, emphasising that parking is strictly prohibited in this area. Additionally, LCC advocated exploring the feasibility of a designated drop-off zone or an “in-and-out” option to mitigate the occurrence of vehicles stopping or parking on the hard shoulder.

Considering the comfort of the P&S facility users, LCC recommended the installation of bus shelters for those awaiting pick-up or drop-off. Furthermore, the suggestion included providing sheltered bicycle parking, acknowledging the potential utility at other P&S facilities, even if its current usage at this particular P&S facility is limited.

Anticipating future initiatives, LCC proposed exploring alternative sites within Louth for a potential second pilot project. Specific locations mentioned included the N53 and Junction 10 of the M1 (junction with the M51), where a substantial number of vehicles park daily within the hard shoulder.

LCC observed limitations for buses at the P&S facility, emphasising challenges related to the roundabout geometric dimensions that hinder

smooth bus transit. To address capacity concerns, LCC affirmed the overall good condition of surfacing, signage, and line markings, with no issues reported.

### TII MMarC

Globalvia Jons, the motorway maintenance contractor responsible for MMarC Network A, was interviewed to provide insights into their perspectives. The MMarC provides the following services within the facility:

- Winter Maintenance;
- Grass Cutting;
- Litter Control; and
- Drainage Maintenance.

In order to carry out winter maintenance, the MMarC employs a specialist sub-consultant as the size of the machinery used for motorway maintenance is not particularly suited to the P&S facility. The layout and height restrictions limit the manoeuvring of large vehicles within the P&S facility.

Grass cutting is conducted three times a year. The MMarC notes that grass growth is minimal due in part to vehicles parking on the grass verge areas within the P&S facility when it is over prescribed. Considering this issue, the MMarC recommends minimising grass verges in future design iterations, proposing the substitution of paved verges.



The MMaRC identifies an evident litter concern at the P&S facility. Presently, they conduct litter control on a fortnightly basis. Notably, users have been observed discarding litter from their vehicles onto the ground. To address this, the MMaRC advocates for an increase in the number of bins available.

Annual standard maintenance on drainage systems is performed by the MMaRC, with no current issues or recommendations to report.

The MMaRC highlights the required replacement of cobble-lock with concrete on the central island of the roundabout, citing damage caused by vehicle overrun. In response to this, they propose the consideration of a larger roundabout design to better accommodate the observed large vehicles navigating through.

## **Parking Observation Follow Up**

Parking surveys conducted by TII on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025 confirmed that the facility is still in high demand four years after opening.

The follow-up survey confirmed that all available car parking spaces (226) were occupied.

- Users were also observed occupying:
- Disabled Spaces (22) provided (by non-badge holders),
- Electric Vehicle charging spaces, and
- grass verges within the facility.



## Summary Conclusions

Based on the surveys and interviews conducted, the following are the main conclusion on the P&S facility at J16 M1, Co. Louth:

- The safety issue with regard to parking on the hard shoulder and pedestrians crossing the road has been removed both on the R215 and the N53. Therefore, this facility has restored the forgiving road side and mitigated the risk to vulnerable road users. Both the MMaRC and Local Authority confirm the P&S facility is operating as intended with previous safety issues now resolved.
  - Most users had already been car-sharing and previously parked on the hard shoulder. However, the opening of the P&S also attracted some new users who had not car-shared before.
  - The P&S is highly successful. Users are highly satisfied with what the facility provides, would recommend it to others, and similar facilities elsewhere are desirable.
  - Users car share with one, two and in some instances four passengers. The main reason given for car sharing is to reduce transport costs and secondly reduce the time/strain of driving.
- The P&S catchment is large. It reaches into Northern Ireland as far as Armagh and Downpatrick, and across to Monaghan and Drogheda in the Republic of Ireland.
- The main destination for all users is Dublin, and the majority of users are from Northern Ireland.
  - The facility is heavily used by commuters travelling to work five days a week (86%). It is also used for other trip purposes such as shopping and leisure seven days a week.
  - Users are satisfied that their vehicles are safe during the day.
  - Most users are motivated to car share to reduce their weekly travel cost, and some users also note that the P&S facility reduces the strain/time driving each week.
  - Users would like a longer set down area, a coffee station, better and more signage on the M1, public transport integration and more P&S facilities.
  - The P&S facility is currently free, users said they would not continue to use it if they had to pay for parking.
  - Parking on grass verges, footpaths and set-down areas hinders necessary maintenance activities.



## Lessons Learned

This section provides lessons learned and recommendations.

### Safety

P&S should be used to remove roadside parking where informal car sharing behaviour is observed on the National Roads network to maintain safe and forgiving roadsides. This was achieved by providing a new facility that attracted existing and new users.

### User Demand

The facility was designed to remove observed roadside parking across a number of nearby routes. The surveys revealed that:

- 1) new car share users were attracted to the facility,
- 2) many people use it five days a week,
- 3) while main trip purpose is work, it also caters for leisure and other purposes,
- 4) the user catchment is much wider than anticipated.

The development and planning of further facilities should consider these factors. It should be noted that the Louth facility is the only one currently operating along a busy north/south route. If additional facilities are provided elsewhere along the M1 corridor the existing very high demand may reduce.

### P&S Maintenance and Operation

The users, Louth County Council and the maintenance operator all raised concerns about litter. The P&S facility has created a new service for road transport customers, and a maintenance regime should be developed to ensure customer satisfaction. This P&S and future iterations should be supported through a dedicated operations and maintenance programme, customer feedback and support and the performance of the facility should be monitored.



### User Comfort

Users and Louth County Council noted the lack of shelter for car share passengers. The development of subsequent facilities should consider providing shelter and the size and length of the set-down areas, particularly if the facility is served by public transport.

### Decarbonise Road Transport

The data collected from users regarding their journey origin and destination illustrated that the P&S is removing long distance single occupancy car trips from the network. The P&S demonstrates a viable contribution to decarbonising rural road transport, one that could increase cumulatively with the provision of additional P&S facilities along the National Roads network.

### Willingness to pay

It is clear from the survey responses that users will not use the facility if a parking fee is applied. The main reason that users have turned to car sharing is to reduce their weekly travel costs. Therefore, parking fees should not be introduced. There is a risk that users may revert to using roadsides and reintroduce the safety problem.

### Parking Enforcement

Parking bye-laws, set by Local Authorities under the Road Traffic Act, should be enacted to prohibit parking on grass verges or hard shoulders, footpaths and disabled spaces (without a permit) to support the safe and efficient operation of the facility for all users.

### P&S Expansion

Finally, users and the local authority expressed a need for and desire for the provision of more P&S facilities.

The observed safety benefits, potential for decarbonisation and customer satisfaction supports and justifies continued TII investment in this type of facility. Other sites currently under consideration in Louth, and other counties, should be progressed and the necessary supports put in place to deliver more high-quality facilities as part of the National Roads network.



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