



# Cllr. Roderic O'GORMAN

Dublin West

28 September 2018

**Re: Submission on BusConnects Proposed Network**

To Whom it may concern,

Please find attached the submission from the Dublin West Green Party on the BusConnects proposed network that was published during the summer.

There are a lot of positive proposals contained in the network plan and the wider set of proposals behind it. The idea of a 90 minute single fair, high frequency spine routes and improved orbital routes should all make for a better service for commuters.

However, there are certain aspects of the proposal as it concerns the Dublin 15 area that have raised concerns. I have summarised the key elements of these in the submission below. I believe that addressing this issues through amendments to the initial proposals will go a long way to addressing public concerns. Some of the issues raised can be addressed through small tweaks. Others require better information to be provided to the public. Some admittedly, may require more substantial changes.

I welcome the extensive public engagement that the NTA has undertaken throughout this process and the engagement with elected representatives through Fingal County Council in my own case.

Yours sincerely,

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## Infrastructural Proposals at the Blanchardstown Town Centre

The concept of interchange is fundamental to the entire BusConnects Report. The Blanchardstown Town Centre will be the key interchange node in the Dublin 15 area. In light of D15 resident's experiences with the current level of traffic congestion in the Town Centre, it is extremely difficult for any of us to envisage how efficient interchange could take place at this location. I know from my engagements with the NTA that it is proposed to bring forward a public consultation on the bus lane infrastructure that is needed to support the project, including any land that will need to be acquired.

In order for these proposals to be effective, there will need to be new and dedicated bus access to the Town Centre at the Snugborough Road junction (where Fingal has already planned a major upgrade) at the N3 entrance at the Plaza Hotel and at the Blakestown Way junction. There will also need to be clear bus-only lanes internally within the Town Centre.

The consultation on bus lanes also needs to include information about what new shelters will be provided within the Town Centre. As people will be expected to change buses, it is vital that vulnerable bus users, such as those with a disability, a movement impairment, parents of young children and the elderly are adequately catered for. This will require not only appropriate shelters, but seating, lighting and ramps/tactile surfaces where necessary.

## Littlepace connectivity and the proposed removal of the 70 route

According to Census 2016, there are 6102 people living in the estates that open onto the Littlepace Road between the Littlepace roundabout and the Bramblefield roundabout. These residents are badly impacted by the current BusConnects draft. They lose the direct bus service to the City Centre (70), which is replaced by the low-frequency 265 route. They also lose connectivity to Dunboyne, through the removal of the 270 route. A significant number of children in this area go to secondary school in Dunboyne village, and the removal of this link with significantly impact on them.

While I understand that the design of the Littlepace Road as a cul de sac presents significant difficulties to Dublin Bus, it is vital that the NTA bring forward new and improved proposals as regards this area and ensure that the residents have a regular bus services that matches the significant population of the area and provides connectivity with Dunboyne to recognise the patterns of school attendance that has built up over many years.

## 37 Route

The proposal to reduce the off-peak frequency of the 37 route is disappointing, and I would ask that the NTA review this. While the argument is made in the Report that the planned increase in off-peak frequency on the Maynooth train line to every half hour (which in itself is very welcome) will make up for this, there are a significant number of estates in the Diswellstown area which are a considerable distance from the Coolmine train station and as such, are unlikely to benefit significantly from the increased train services (Woodbrook, Fernleigh, Annfield, parts of Luttrellstown).

The removal of the detour down Screen Road is welcomed as a measure to reduce the overall length of the 37 bus journey. However, I would strongly urge the NTA to reconsider the proposal that this route (and the 35) would terminate in the north inner city and not go cross-city. The introduction of the cross-city element a number of years ago has significantly increased the popularity of this route and I believe it would be a mistake to undo this.

#### Institute of Technology Blanchardstown connectivity

The Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB), which will soon be a component of the Technological University of Dublin has made a detailed submission outline some concerns about the current draft. Bearing in mind that one of the goals of the BusConnects report is to provide connectivity to educational institutions, I would have a concern that the ITB is not adequately connected to key interchange hubs. On the current draft map, the 35 passes beside the ITB, though it is unclear if this bus will actually pass through the ITB grounds or just stop outside. This bus is relatively low frequency off-peak. The 262 passes the Ballycoolin roundabout, about a 10 minutes walk from the ITB, but this would appear to be the less frequent extension route to Broombridge Luas (though that link is positive). I would strongly urge that one of the feeder routes that circulate from the Blanchardstown Town Centre (261, 262 or 263) would go through the ITB to give clear connectivity. It would also be useful to connect the ITB with Coolmine Station, as there is already an existing private bus route serving here at an extra cost to the ITB.

#### 39X – 360 Route

While the provision of the extra 360 morning service is welcome, the fact that it does not mirror the starting point of the current 39X service is inexplicable. The 39X is a popular service and cutting out the entire Ongar area from its reach will disadvantage many commuters. It is important that this service commences in the Ongar area.

#### Removal of 38B

Currently, the 38B provides useful early morning services in and out of the City Centre to the industrial estates to the north of Corduff (Ballycoolin) and to the west of Mulhuddart (Damastown). One of its key advantages is that, but using the N3 for much of its journey, it can get to and from Dublin 15 quite rapidly. While the proposed 363 may replace some of these services for Damastown, the 35 route, which travels through Ballycoolin, has to travel through three major traffic bottlenecks (Castleknock village, Blanchardstown village, Blanchardstown Town Centre). This service will not be attractive to morning commuters seeking to get to the industrial estates around Ballycoolin, and cannot be understood as an adequate replacement of the 38B.

#### Capacity on the B Spine

The concept of the high frequency B-spine route, branching off onto the B1 and B2 routes, is broadly welcomed. These two routes ensure that large parts of Ongar, Hansfield, Clonsilla, Hartstown and Huntstown maintain a high quality and high frequency service. These communities are highly populated and are still growing, particularly in the Hansfield area where the SDZ is being built out. The interchange with Clonsilla station is also positive.

The B-spine route is expected to have sufficient capacity for those people travelling on the B1 and B2 routes, but also to provide for people who are interchanging in the Blanchardstown Town Centre in order to travel to the City Centre. As such, it will also be carrying people from routes such as the 261, 262, 263, 264 etc as well as those already on the bus. It is important that there is clarity as to whether there will be sufficient capacity from the Town Centre to the City Centre (and visa-versa), considering that the line is expected to carry more than just those travelling passed the Town Centre.

#### Tyrrelstown, 35 route and the old 39 route

The increased connectivity between Tyrrelstown and the Blanchardstown Town Centre through the 262 route is welcomed, as is the link to Broombridge. While Tyrrelstown also maintains a direct bus route to the City Centre (35) I would be concerned that this route attempts to do so much, (Tyrrelstown, Ballycoolin industrial estate, ITB, Town Centre, Blanchardstown village, Castleknock village) which means that the journey is going to take a very long time and will be unattractive to use.

Is there some way whereby a third direct service could be introduced that would serve Castleknock village, Blanchardstown village, the Clonsilla road and terminate in the Town Centre, thus allowing the 35 route to skip Castleknock village and Blanchardstown village, thereby decreasing the journey time? This option would also mean that that there would be some direct services from the Clonsilla Road area to the City Centre.