

Submission to Fingal Local Authority

On

Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029

By

Flexibus Local Link Louth Meath Fingal

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Background

Flexibus Local Link Louth Meath Fingal

Flexibus Meath Accessible Transport Project CLG formed in 2001 working under the Rural Transport Programme, now funded under the National Transport Authority (NTA).

Local Link Louth Meath Fingal is the rebranded name for the Rural Transport Program. Local Link LMF is the Transport Co-Ordination Unit (TCU) for Louth, Meath and Fingal (LMF). We are a social enterprise. Our Board of Directors is representative of Community, Local Authority Louth Meath Fingal, Disability, and Education.

The Board of Directors ensure that the Board members and the Company are in full compliance with statutory obligations. The Board also ensure that the Governance, Health & Safety Management System is always up to date. Staff can feel safe in the knowledge of good practice. The Board complies with all standards in Financial Management. We present a compliant organisation which is respected across the community and valued as trustworthy, safe and reliable, in line with core values.

Local Link LMF has established a fully accessible fleet of vehicles to respond to the varying needs of our communities. We work to the highest standards of Health and Safety and Governance to the forefront. We contract with local transport providers for services to the public, and provide a combination of services at different levels of frequency as needed.

Theme 3

Connectivity and Movement.

Flexibus Local Link LMF fulfils **three important roles** in relation to rural transport in counties Louth Meath & Fingal

- As a transport Coordination Unit (TCU)
- As A Rural Transport Service Provider
- As Social Enterprise Entity

The high level of car ownership demands the intervention of public transport because if you, have no access to a car, employment or access to college is very difficult and being part of your community or taking part in community activities is very limited.

What are the key connectivity and movement issues affecting workers, residents and visitors within Fingal? "

The availability of public transport in urban/urbanised Fingal is quite good in comparison to surrounding counties with access to a good railway network, bus service and Go Car. Private car journeys are still top of the list for transportation in Fingal.

Local Link provide limited transport from rural areas to merge with mainline services accessing the capital and beyond.

Issues

1. Residents using private car to go to work.
2. Congestion
3. Low use of public transport
4. Excessive emissions
5. Air Pollution
6. First Mile Last mile.
7. Insufficient public transport from rural and semi rural areas to access mainline transport.

How can we make it easier to get around Fingal? "

1. Maximise the use of Public Transport through Encouragement and Investment
2. First Mile Last Mile local solutions and support
3. Policy interventions by the Local Authority
4. Tax policies not a great solution
5. Parking restrictions

How can we ensure improved co-ordination between land-use and transportation infrastructure to achieve more sustainable development? "

All planning permissions granted should have a transport plan agreed with the Local Authority and discussed with NTA.

How do we increase walking, cycling and public transport use and reduce car dependency? "

1. Cycle Lanes
2. Fare reduction
3. Park & Ride
4. Work with schools to encourage walking to school
5. Support for First mile Last mile

How can the safety of cyclists and pedestrians be improved? What measures could be put in place to make this happen? "

1. Education through schools and college
2. Cycle Lanes
3. Community bicycle training for young children.
4. Health & Safety awareness.
5. Traffic wardens.
- 6.

How can rural transport and accessibility be improved? "

1. Improvement in the frequency of Local Link services to ensure access to public transport
2. Reduction in Fare to incentivise people to take the bus
3. Include all rural villages with an enhanced transport service for commuters and education.
4. Clearly marked Bus Stops with Real Time Passenger Information
5. Increased Local Link services to include a more frequent service on the LL195 Ashbourne to Balbriggan route.
6. Increased Regular Service from Ballyboughal and Naul to access Swords during peak hours to facilitate access to work and education.
7. Increased service between Oldtown and Garristown to Ashbourne to access Employment and Education.
8. Increased and integrated hospital services for people who need to be collected at home using existing resources.
9. Local Link service to respond to temporary transport deficit situations, for older people, the homeless and the disadvantaged in conjunction with the Local Authority. This will give access to transport in difficult or crisis situations under the Local Authority.

Accessibility.

1. Accessibility is part of procurement policy introduced by the NTA some time ago and all vehicles under the Local Link Programme must be accessible.
2. Local Link take accessibility very seriously and will not accept any vehicle that is not accessible and preferably low floor. We do not accept any driver who has not had accessibility training. This must be part of every public service that is available to the public.

Community Transport.

Prior to the pandemic we had sporadic service supporting communities to come together for community services e.g. Active Groups , specific arts groups , Mens shed, and bingo type services.

We now know and appreciate how valuable these services are for older people. We know the effects of the removal of these community services have had.

It is time to look at community services in a positive light. These services are not seen as part of public transport however the role they play is as important as any other transport services that are provided by the state. I propose that between Age Friendly Fingal, Fingal Local Authority, the National Transport Authority and Local Link that we ensure that funding is available to support these activities as soon as restrictions are lifted and vaccinations have been carried out.

First Mile Last mile

1. Public promotion and perception of walking or cycling the First Mile Last Mile which has great benefits for the population and no costs, except for bicycle parking that is safe and secure
2. Technology enabled mobility solutions e.g. car sharing, electric cars (Go Car), electric bicycles and scooters) can create solutions and opportunities to cover the first/last mile.
3. Fingal is particularly suited to First Last Mile as all the towns and villages have high percentage of housing and housing developments.

What are the top priorities in meeting the mobility needs of all citizens in a fair and inclusive way?

1. All public transport to be accessible.
2. Access to Health and hospital appointments for those who are unable to use public transport or personal vehicle.
3. Increase in Local Ink service particularly in smaller towns and villages.
4. Increase access to the rail line which is the most mobility friendly transport available.
5. Increase infrastructure at all railway stations.
6. Reduce the cost of rail tickets particularly for passengers who board the bus in Gormanston. The rate is so significant that the passengers will travel to Balbriggan to save the difference in fare thus bringing more congestion to Balbriggan.
7. Increase parking space at all railway stations
8. Increase cost of public parking to encourage leaving the car at home
9. Support First Last Mile to enable a significant increase in Public Transport usage

Should we be making greater use of shared community cars and bicycle schemes?

1. Yes. The Go Car scheme in 2019-2020 was just becoming a great success story when it was cut short. This will be revived again and can be replicated in all towns in Fingal with the support of the Local Authority and the National Transport Authority.
2. Volunteers are very valued for the service they give to passengers. Skerries had 20 volunteers to support transport in the GO Car and this was a phenomenal number of volunteers in any area.
3. The success of shared cars and bikes can be seen in our cities and Fingal has the population to match some cities.

What other mobility measures could be put in place to reduce car use?

1. In Rural Fingal more local and community public services will reduce car use.
2. Funding local initiatives that support access to regular public transport (first mile last mile) and this will reduce car use, emissions, congestion.

In your view, what are the key priorities to enhance Fingal's strategic connectivity offered by its air, road and rail corridors? "

1. To enhance connectivity in rural Fingal, transport support must be given to smaller towns and villages to encourage the use of public transport.
2. Regular Local transport must be available for employment, education, and access to central service in rural areas.
3. This should include Park & Ride, escooters, ebikes, ecars as hire modes of transport to invite people to use as First Mile Last Mile options.

How can we reduce harmful emissions from transport?

1. Joined up thinking between the Local Authority and transport providers to set targets for increased public transport usage.
2. Financial incentives to switch to electric vehicles
3. Plan to replace public service vehicles with cleaner greener vehicle models. This
4. One bus (cleaner and greener) can replace 20/40/60 cars in an area
5. One train can replace ?????? cars albeit that the train has high emissions.
6. Walking and cycling incentives must be forthcoming as these can be lifetime changes.

Conclusion.

Please find above submission by Flexibus Local Link Louth Meath Fingal.

This submission is supported by our experience of working the Fingal area, working with the Local Authority and with community groups who have transport needs.

It reflects the issues we have seen in Fingal over the past years.

It echoes the demands and requests we have heard from many individuals and community groups over that time.

It exposes the deficit of services in Rural Fingal and the difficulty people have in accessing public transport in the rural and less urban areas.

Fingal currently enjoys and has expectations of top class public transport reflecting the current population and the expected population growth.

Miriam Mc Kenna 29-4-2021