



FINGAL ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

CONSULTATION FINDINGS

IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Client/Project owner	Fingal County Council
Project	Active Travel Strategy Consultation
Title of Document	Consultation Report
Date	21/02/2023
Reference number	300771
Number of pages	16

APPROVAL

Version	Name	Position	Date	Modifications	
1	Author	Paul Osborne	Associate	31/05/2022	First draft for Client Review
	Checked by	Paul Osborne	Associate	02/06/2022	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Associate Director	03/06/2022	
2nd	Author	Paul Osborne	Associate	28/06/2022	Second draft for Client Review
	Checked by	Paul Osborne	Associate	28/06/2022	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Associate Director	29/06/2022	
3rd	Author	Paul Osborne	Associate	15/07/2022	Third draft for Client Review
	Checked by	Paul Osborne	Associate	18/07/2022	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Associate Director	18/07/2022	
4th	Author	Paul Osborne	Associate	22/07/2022	Fourth draft for Client Review
	Checked by	Paul Osborne	Associate	22/07/2022	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Associate Director	22/07/2022	



5	Drafted by	Alison Pickett	Director	12/01/2023	Fifth draft incorporating SEA and AA Screening Consultation
	Checked by	Paul Osborne	Associate	12/01/2023	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	13/01/2023	
6	Drafted by	Alison Pickett	Director	03/02/2023 and 21/02/2023	Sixth draft and final version incorporating SEA and AA Screening Consultation
	Checked by	Paul Osborne	Associate	03/02/2023 and 21/02/2023	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	03/02/2023 and 21/02/2023	

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Fingal County Council (FCC) supported by transport consultancy, SYSTRA Ltd., is developing an Active Travel Strategy for Fingal, to make Active Travel an easy and convenient choice for everyone living, working in and visiting Fingal, and the first choice for journeys under 5km taken in the County.



- 1.1.2 “Active Travel”, comprises any journey undertaken by walking, running, cycling and any other wheeling activity, such as use of scooters, wheelchairs and prams.
- 1.1.3 Developed by FCC’s Department of Environment, Climate Action and Active Travel, this document is a first for Fingal as it looks to the future of Active Travel and transport in the county. The Strategy details ambitions to increase the number of people choosing Active Travel for everyday short journeys and sets out a wide array of infrastructure and initiatives designed to support that goal.
- 1.1.4 Consultation on the draft Active Travel Strategy took place from 04 April to 23 May 2022, and comprised of a wide range of engagement activities including promotion of the consultation via a press release, social media channels and at local Active Travel events, a presentation to elected Members, two public webinars, an online survey on Fingal’s consultation portal, along with one-to-one engagement with a number of key stakeholders.
- 1.1.5 The feedback gathered in this non-statutory public consultation will be used to inform the final Active Travel Strategy. Once finalised the Active Travel Strategy for Fingal will be used by key decision makers in Fingal County Council to inform choices that influence how people travel in the county.



1.2 Report Contents

1.2.1 This report outlines the findings of the consultation as follows:

- **Chapter 2** provides an overview of the consultation and engagement process.
- **Chapter 3** provides a summary of the survey and written submissions received.
- **Chapter 4** summarises feedback from Councillors and the two public webinars.
- **Chapter 5** summarises the stakeholder discussions.
- **Chapter 6** summarises the consultation outcomes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and the Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment.
- **Chapter 7** outlines next steps.

1.2.2 The report is also accompanied by a number of Appendices:

- **Appendix A** outlines a summary of online survey responses
- **Appendix B** details all written submissions received in relation to the Consultation.

1.2.3 Supporting documents include the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and the Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment (AA).

1.2.4 All data analysis and reporting has been undertaken by SYSTRA Ltd, with the exception of the SEA and AA reports, which were both compiled by Minogue & Associates Environmental Consultancy.



2. CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- 2.1.1 The draft Active Travel Strategy was open to non-statutory public consultation between 04 April 2022 and 23 May 2022, to understand the level of support for the draft actions within the Strategy, as well as people's perceptions of the Strategy's impacts.
- 2.1.2 An online consultation was managed by Fingal County Council on their consultation portal at <https://consult.fingal.ie/en/consultation/draft-active-travel-strategy-fingal>. Viewing statistics are not recorded on the consultation portal.
- 2.1.3 The consultation was promoted on the Fingal website at <https://www.fingal.ie/activetravel/strategy>. The webpage generated the following interactions:
- 1,100 views from 971 viewers during period 01 April to 31 May 2022.
 - 25 of these people viewed webinar recordings on the [fingal.ie](https://www.fingal.ie) website with a further 27 viewing directly on the Fingal County Council YouTube channel.
 - 249 of these people opened the strategy document.
- 2.1.4 The consultation was also promoted through the following activities:
- Three Active Travel Roadshow appearances where the Fingal Active Travel Team spoke to the public about the Strategy:
 - Blanchardstown Shopping Centre, Sunday 15 May 2022 from 10-2pm
 - Swords Pavilions Shopping Centre, Tuesday 17 May 2022 from 2-4pm
 - Malahide Castle, Sunday 2 May 2022 from 12-5pm.
 - Representatives from Active Travel also brought the draft Strategy to the AGM of the Fingal Public Participation Network (FPPN) which took place on the evening of Wednesday, 18 May 2022.
 - Social media promotion through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram (33 separate posts in total – which in total generated over 23,000 impressions, 120 likes and over 400 engagements).
 - A press release issued to local and national press, Councillors and key FCC staff (165 total contacts) on April 4 2022 with official launch photos. The release had a 38% open rate and a 2.5% click through rate. It generated the following coverage:
 - Council Journal online <https://council.ie/fingal-active-travel-strategy-now-under-public-consultation/>
 - Fingal Independent online and print edition <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/dublin/fingal/have-your-say-on-getting-fingal-moving-as-public-invited-to-respond-to-countys-active-travel-strategy-41529256.html>
 - Irish Cycle online <https://irishcycle.com/2022/04/04/active-travel-strategy-for-fingal-to-inform-choices-that-influence-how-people-travel/>



Figure 1. Kieran Maher, Sinéad Murphy and David Storey pictured at Hartstown Park for launch of non-statutory public consultation for the draft Fingal Active Travel Strategy.

2.1.5 To respond to the consultation, organisations and members of the public could complete a structured online questionnaire (containing both closed and open-ended questions). There was also an opportunity to make written submissions either online or by post.

2.1.6 A presentation in relation to the draft Strategy was made to Fingal County Council's Transport & Infrastructure Management Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) on 9 March 2022. In addition, three webinars were also held, one for councillors and two for the public which included a presentation by Sinead Murphy, Senior Engineer at Fingal County Council supported by SYSTRA staff. These events were held on:

- 31 March 2022 – Councillors
- 28 April and 9 May 2022 – Public Webinars

2.1.7 A number of key stakeholders nominated by Fingal County Council were sent copies of the draft strategy document and their feedback was sought by structured interview via MS Teams. In most cases the discussion was led by SYSTRA, with background support from Council representatives. Those organisations engaged included:

- An Garda Síochána – Roads Policing Unit
- Dublin Fire Brigade
- Fingal Chamber
- Health Service Executive – Public Health
- National Ambulance Service
- National Transport Authority
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland



3. CONSULTATION FINDINGS

3.1 Response Rate

- 3.1.1 Overall, 162 responses were received in relation to the consultation. Of these, 11 were online survey responses and 151 were written submissions (comprising 99 postal submissions and 52 online submissions).
- 3.1.2 Of these 151 submissions, 99 were an identical submission signed by separate individuals in relation to feedback for Active Travel improvements in a local area in Fingal – these will be considered as part of the development of the Active Travel Delivery Plan.
- 3.1.3 The vast majority of the submissions were broadly supportive of the draft Active Travel Strategy. Of the 52 online submissions, explicit support for the strategy in general terms (or in relation to particular elements of the strategy), was expressed by 35 of the respondents. Although not explicitly articulated, we can infer that the identical submission representing 99 individuals expressed broad support for the strategy, with for example the submission stating that the provision of active travel infrastructure “*would be a great benefit to the community, it would reduce isolation, bring good health benefits and it would reduce emissions*”.
- 3.1.4 With the exception of a single submission, explicit support for the strategy was coupled with at least one suggestion and in many instances a number of suggestions. Despite the prevalence of concerns expressed in the submissions (86 of the total 387 comments analysed from 151 written submissions), only one respondent was explicitly unsupportive of the strategy, expressing that the strategy did not appreciate the reality of people whose mobility is reliant on cars.
- 3.1.5 In relation to the 11 survey responses (which must be considered in the context of a low response rate), 8 respondents expressed support for the strategy and the principle of improving walking and cycling in Fingal, be it very supportive (4) or generally supportive (4). Of the remaining three respondents, two were neutral in this regard and 1 very unsupportive.

3.2 Submission Responses

- 3.2.1 Eleven responses were submitted via the online consultation survey. Given this number does not represent a statistically representative sample, an outline of the responses to the survey is detailed in Appendix A in numerical rather than percentage format.
- 3.2.2 The vast majority of the written submissions received were in relation to suggestions for improvements at specific locations. These will be considered in the emerging Active Travel Delivery Plan.
- 3.2.3 All written responses can be found in Appendix B and are also available to view online at <https://consult.fingal.ie/en/node/25162/submissions>
- 3.2.4 There was broad support for the Strategy with positive comments made about its breadth and ambition:



I just want to say thank you to the Active Travel Department for bringing forward such a comprehensive document. There is certainly the tools here to deliver transformative change in the way we move around our communities that will deliver safer streets, more connected communities, improved air quality, better health outcomes for individuals, boost local trade, increase tourism in Fingal, lower carbon emissions and generally improve quality of life in our towns and villages.

The overall thrust of the draft strategy is very welcome and is supported. Fingal County Council should pursue this strategy energetically and commit the necessary resources.

I would like to commend Fingal County Council on this thoroughly-thought-through plan and the excellent report and documentation.

We warmly welcome this draft strategy and the opportunity to review the Active Travel Strategy Document. Overall, it is visionary and comprehensive. It is really positive and encouraging to read about the prioritisation of active travel.

Great to see level of inclusive images.

3.2.5 There were suggestions for changes in the use of imagery:

Include images in report that promote fact that disabled people cycle.

Use 'more normal' photos of cyclists instead of all the Hi-viz and helmets photos which make cycling seem dangerous.

3.2.6 There were very relatively few comments made about the impact of the proposed strategy on car drivers. Of the 387 comments analysed from the total 151 written submissions, approximately 22 comments explicitly mentioned the word 'car'. The vast majority of these comments align to the prioritisation of Active Travel in Fingal and relate to road car park space re-allocation for secure bike parking for example, or the importance of infrastructure provision to disincentivise car use. One respondent did express concerns that the strategy is not cognizant of the reality of those dependent on car use for their mobility:

Fingal CC seems intent on criminalising those who drive cars, making life as hard as possible for them forgetting that the vast majority of those driving have little choice, pay tax and are bringing up families.

3.2.7 Several respondents noted the absence of quantified targets within the Strategy:



Strategy should be updated when necessary to coincide with likely updated national targets around active travel modal share.

Strategy must aim for 50% of daily commutes to be taken by active travel modes by 2030.

Stated (GDA) 11.9% target for 2042 modal share does not reflect urgency of climate crisis.

- 3.2.8 The need to ensure a proportionate approach in different communities was also mentioned:

For settlements such as Skerries/Lusk, there is less need for large scale cycle lanes, but much need to calm traffic and pedestrianize in order to make active travel possible.

- 3.2.9 A number of emerging policy and research reports were mentioned, published since the draft document was prepared including the Sustrans Walking and Cycling Index and the National Mobility Strategy, including its Transport Users Hierarchy. These will be incorporated into the final draft of the Strategy.

- 3.2.10 Also mentioned was the need to ensure that the Strategy should be referenced (and should make links to) to the future Fingal Development Plan and settlement-specific Local Transport Plans (LTPs) / Area Based Transport Assessments (ABTAs), with active travel interventions guided by the outcomes of the LTP process:

Statement on page 19 could include that active travel plans will be guided by local transport plans.

The strategy should be referenced in chapter 14 (Development Management) of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029.

The Active Travel Strategy should reference the importance of Local Transport Plans as a critical step in identifying active travel schemes in the Fingal area and the preparation of an Active Travel Delivery Plan.

- 3.2.11 There was much support for improved cycling infrastructure as a pre-requisite for change. Other area-wide initiatives such as lower speed limits, safe driving campaigns, and provision of secure cycle parking were popular too.

I would like to see more protected cycle-ways in my area. I try to cycle as much as possible for local journeys, but I often end up in the car because cycling is not safe (especially with my children).

There is only so much initiatives such as Cycling Without Age or Cycle Buses can achieve without putting in place physical infrastructure. These are all worthy



initiatives and well-meaning but when it comes down to implementing and building cycle lanes infrastructure is the key.

- 3.2.12 Respondents asked that where new developments are planned, or can be improved, small scale measures which address permeability should be included:

Gated/walled-in communities in Skerries permit very little permeability for pedestrians, impeding safe and easy route choice

- 3.2.13 There was support for the idea of an Active Travel Champion/s who could increase the pace at which Fingal delivers its Active Travel infrastructure. Despite feedback being invited on the role and identity of a possible Active Travel Champion, one respondent did recommend that the *'it might be a job for a professional/former professional/high-profile amateur cyclist – or walker'*, this despite the same respondent not being in favour of the appointment of an Active Travel Champion. There was a positive response from the individual stakeholder meetings in relation to the concept of an Active Travel Champion or Champions across the County.
- 3.2.14 There was also a request for a separate chapter on Data and Analysis, in place of references to a Monitoring Plan. This will be considered within the Delivery Plan.

Monitoring and evaluation framework should come under a new Data Gathering & Analysis chapter.

- 3.2.15 There was some concern that electric vehicles and car sharing are not necessarily relevant to the Active Travel Strategy.

Electric cars are not helpful to active travel.



4. WEBINARS

4.1 Councillor Feedback

4.1.1 Councillors from the Transport & Infrastructure Management Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) attended the webinar meeting held on 9 March 2022, along with a councillor briefing call held on 31 March 2022. The feedback was broadly supportive of the Strategy content. Requests were made for the following changes:

- More recognition in opening text that not all people may be able to walk or cycle.
- Adding text around intention to trial new schemes which draw upon national and international practice, and adjust in line with resident feedback.
- Refer to Planning *and* Economy in policy section.
- Include engagement with business sector as well as voluntary sector in helping to deliver the Strategy.
- Adding reference to Fingal Migrant Integration and Social Cohesion Strategy 2019-2024.
- Reflect on images to ensure that the document is fully inclusive.

4.2 Public Feedback

4.2.1 Two public webinars were held on 28th April and 9th May 2022. 60 people registered to attend, with final attendance of 17 people across the two webinars.

4.2.2 A number of suggestions were made in relation to Active Travel improvements in specific local areas and these will be fed into the development of the Active Travel Delivery Plan. The following feedback was noted in relation to the draft Strategy:

- Importance of linking up existing Greenways to suburban areas.
- Importance of engaging with local businesses as part of Active Travel scheme development, both during the planning, construction and implementation phases (particularly where this involves the removal of car parking spaces).
- Importance of making it safer for children to walk to school.



5. STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

- 5.1.1 All comments from representatives of stakeholder organisations were made anonymously.
- 5.1.2 Each of the organisations recognised the direct and indirect benefits of Active Travel.
- 5.1.3 There is strong support for the Strategy aims, content and style.

The Strategy document is broad, comprehensive, and easy to read. Looks good, user friendly, easy to understand. Really liked the Building on Success to show activities are not new, helps us to see the collective impact over time and showcase things [around the] County already done/doing.

Well laid out, clear, comprehensive.

Looks great, easy to follow

Great, relevant, colourful, concise, fresh... inspiring template for our own strategy design.

- 5.1.4 There is support for each of the Strategy Themes, but in particular for Connectivity and Protected Cycleways, followed by Road Safety.
- 5.1.5 There is strong support for the idea of an Active Travel Champion (at multiple levels) to move the Strategy forward, who can provide impetus and drive to support delivery. It might be worth considering a 'Train the Trainer' approach as a means of disseminating the role to local champions as the Active Travel Delivery Plan is developed and implemented.
- 5.1.6 Stakeholders were happy to support delivery of the Strategy where possible. This support could include publicity, advocacy via their own staff, internal Active Travel challenges, joining an FCC Active Travel Steering Group, and feeding into and commenting on the Active Travel Delivery Plan.
- 5.1.7 There should be consideration of the following changes:
 - Strengthen the references to the wider benefits of Active Travel with respect to air quality, community and social cohesion, public health, opportunities for social interaction and people's physical and mental health and wellbeing.
 - Include reference to opportunities for innovation and business participation and business development related to active travel.
 - Towns & Villages – important to consider the role of Place as well as Movement within this Pillar, creating enticing places for people to enjoy.
 - Recognise the need for national legislation on e-scooters.
 - Consider adding 8-80 years reference / design for all ages within the Strategy.
 - Reference updated GDA Cycle Plan (when published), the National Roads Strategy 2040 (when published), the proposed new National Cycle Plan (TII consultation)



routes within the FCC area and also the forthcoming updates to the NTA National Cycling Manual.

- Reference Sustainable Urban Drainage in any new infrastructure plans.
- Consider updating Strategy to highlight role of Active Travel in the Development Management Process within the Strategic Planning Section of the Strategy.
- Strengthen the references to the importance of improved integration between cycling and public transport .
- Delivery Plan to focus on local and orbital routes as well as radial cycle routes, particularly in suburban areas.
- Strengthen references to focus on household trips of all types, not just commuting journeys.
- Provide cross reference to Fingal County Council parking strategies.



6. ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING

6.1.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and the Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment (AA) for the draft Fingal Active Travel Strategy were issued to statutory environmental authorities for a four week period with submissions received from the following consultees:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)
- Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM).

6.1.2 Please see the accompanying reports (Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and the Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment (AA) for more details.

6.1.3 Please see Annex B of the final SEA Screening Report for a summary of the points raised and the SEA and AA response to the same. In summary, the EPA provided advice in relation to SEA Guidance, available datasets and reference to any infrastructural planning, and screening of changes to the plan. DAFM had no comments on the submission.

6.1.4 In response to concerns raised by the DHLGH the following minor changes have been made to the final Active Travel Strategy for Fingal as follows:

- Additional text to clarify the planning hierarchy and that should any projects arise from the Active Travel Strategy, they would be consistent and compliant with relevant consenting processes including, inter alia EIA, AA and EclA as appropriate. Page 2 of the Strategy was amended as follows:

"Any land use development or activity progressed under this Strategy shall be required to comply with provisions of the current and future Fingal County Development Plan and the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area."

- The removal of projects within the text previously listed on Page 19 (not actions or objectives) that references 'projects underway'. For the avoidance of doubt any projects yet to be subject to planning approval are now removed from the Active Travel Strategy.

6.1.5 In light of these minor revisions and clarifications, it has been determined that no likely significant effects are identified for the implementation of the Active Travel Strategy for Fingal County Council.

6.2 SEA and AA Determinations

6.2.1 An SEA Screening Determination has been prepared under SI 435 of 2004 as amended by SI 200 of 2011 and will be made available. An AA Screening Determination will also be made available.



7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1.1 The Strategy will be updated in light of comments received as part of the non-statutory public consultation process and reissued as a final Strategy in Spring 2023 for the consideration of Councillors.
- 7.1.2 A summary of written responses detailing local issues will be shared with Fingal County Council for consideration as part of the development of the Active Travel Delivery Plan.



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