



Cllr. ADRIAN HENCHY

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Submission to Bus Connects in relation to Donabate and Portrane

Introduction

Firstly, thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the BusConnects proposal and for the significant work and effort that has been put into what is arguably the biggest review and policy change of bus transport in Dublin for a very long time. My submission below is based on the large volume of emails and feedback I have received on the proposal over the last two months and the vast bulk of this information came from the communities of Donabate and Portrane which has historically been served by the 33B service Portrane/Donabate/Swords and one very popular daily service direct to the City Centre via the Port Tunnel the 33D.

It would appear to me that the proposed changes to services for Donabate and Portrane would result in a reduction in bus services for the area and it would appear a lot of weight is given to the fact Donabate is served by a commuter train service. However this service provides no links with Swords and places such as Dublin City University and Beaumont hospital and it is critical that serious consideration is given to connecting the Peninsula to Swords/DCU instead of the proposal to end the 33B at Clongriffin. Can I also emphasise the critical importance of not only maintaining the current 33D service through the Port Tunnel to the City Centre but this service needs to be grown and serious consideration given to instead of terminating in the City Centre but to consider perhaps UCD thus connecting North Fingal with both South Dublin and a major University.

Currently the population in Donabate and Portrane is growing at a fast pace and there are future plans for even further growth within the next few years. The peninsula in the next couple of years is also going to see the opening of the new National Forensic Mental Hospital from its current location in Dundrum to the St. Ita's Hospital Campus Portrane, a hospital campus which I have no doubt will regenerate with the opening of the new National facility and a campus which is totally dependent on a regular bus service as it is based a number of kilometres from Donabate train station. The plan places a heavy emphasis on the fact the peninsula is served by a commuter train service from



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Donabate train station. Currently at peak times commuter rail services are at full capacity on the Northern line and on a daily basis I receive emails from passengers who cannot even get on the train as it is full prior to arriving into Donabate Train Station. Donabate and Portrane have a large commuter population and one that is currently served by only one direct bus service to and from Dublin City. The BusConnects proposal promises to increase frequency within the M50, but would reduce commuter and direct services for Dublin' commuter belt and in particular, for commuters within Donabate and Portrane. I would strongly oppose some of the changes as the population of Donabate and Portane need a direct service into the city centre and do not need a reduction in service or indeed longer commute times. It also needs to be recognised Donabate Portrane is on the verge of having a new distributor road opened which will by pass the village but will also open new lands for new housing so careful consideration and thought will need to be applied to the future bus route within the peninsula before you reach the M1.

The proposals currently are,

1. The **33d** would be replaced by the non-direct **280/D1** route. This route would not go directly to Dublin City Centre and would require a change in Clare Hall. This is not acceptable to the community of Donabate and Portrane as this service is only once daily to and from the city and is a service well used by the community. Most mornings the bus is full after it makes it's last pick up close to Jones's Garden Centre just before the Donabate/M1 roundabout. - Under no circumstances should this service be changed or stopped, it needs in fact to developed and improved.
2. The **33b** would be replaced by the **280** (every 40 minutes from Portrane to Clongriffin).

Having reviewed the plans and the proposal to bring the new 280i from Portrane to Clongriffin, I would submit that a route to DCU via the Airport and Swords would be far more useful to the residents of Donabate/Portrane for the details outlined in the assessment below. It makes no sense to bring the new bus service to Clongriffin when the route already provides for a connection to Irish Rail via Donabate train station. A terminus at either Dublin Airport or DCU makes far more sense. In addition, there is a need for up to three express services from the Peninsula to the City Centre via the Port Tunnel and on to UCD daily.



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Having reviewed the BusConnects website, I was surprised by a number of matters and in particular, by the lack of any meaningful enhancements to the bus service to the Donabate/Portrane peninsula, in addition to the wider Fingal area. Donabate is an area with significant projected growth and is a key part of the Fingal Development Strategy and part of the Fingal Metropolitan area. Therefore, it is of great surprise that it will not have any meaningful enhancement to existing bus services as part of this plan. In trying to understand this, and having viewed the supporting documentation provided on the NTA website, it appears that the root of the problem is that Donabate was not included in the original study area for the Dublin Area Plan.

Fingal has significant plans for the growth of Donabate Portrane and the existing provision of public transport is not near the required level to accommodate those future plans. The proposed Bus Connects plan needs to be amended to be more aligned with both the Fingal Development Plan and Donabate Local Area Plan as otherwise it is meaningless for the people of Fingal and for my submission the communities of Donabate Portrane. This should not come as a surprise to the NTA as it is called out in the NTA's own "Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area", in the description of "Corridor A", which includes Donabate and other surrounding towns as having amongst the highest forecast growth in transport demand up to 2025. According to the BusConnects website: "Thanks to BusConnects, just about everybody will be able to beat the congestion by using the bus rather than a car to get around" It is assumed that this does not apply to the people of Fingal and more specifically the Donabate/Portrane peninsula and the surrounding towns? We need a regular bus service from Portrane to DCU, servicing Donabate, Swords and Dublin Airport in addition to at least three express services from the peninsula to UCD via the Port Tunnel and City Centre.

There is great concern that Fingal has almost been completely forgotten. It is apparent that a significant part of Fingal, including Donabate, has been excluded from detailed analysis for no apparent reason even though this area is part of the Fingal Metropolitan Area.

Assessment of Services to Donabate/Portrane: At present the people of Donabate/Portrane and those looking to work in the area have three public transport services.

1. The train;
2. The 33B to and from Swords (approximately every 40mins) to be replaced by the 280; and
3. The 33D to and from the City Centre (1 service daily).

The train is an effective mode of public transport for the people of Donabate who wish to travel to the City Centre and for Secondary School students travelling to nearby towns on the train line. However, by the time Southbound trains arrive in Donabate, the trains, particularly in the morning, are packed to full capacity. As the population grows in Donabate, not everybody will be able to fit on



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the train. Therefore, the train in its present form will not be sufficient to service the needs to the population of Donabate/Portrane.

There is also the phantom Donabate DART proposal which rears its head about once every five years. While the DART may be a longer term solution, it is not on the cards any time soon and a bus solution is needed for two reasons for Donabate/Portrane namely 1) the volume of passengers, and 2) the diversity of destinations (Airport, Beaumont hospital, DCU).

The 33B (to be replaced by the 280) - the issue with this replacement service is that a bus that goes through Malahide is not beneficial to the community of Donabate and Portrane given the train to Malahide only takes 4 minutes. Therefore, a route via the Airport with a terminus in DCU would be considered much more appropriate. DCU is a very popular University with large amounts of young people from Donabate and Portrane travelling to the University daily and this is expected to significantly grow in the short to medium term.

Conclusion

The Donabate and Portrane communities rely on their bus services. Our peak commuter services need expansion not contraction. Our bus services should connect residents of Donabate and Portrane with Swords Dublin Airport and DCU but should also focus on getting residents into the city swiftly and we are very fortunate to have easy access to a major piece of Infrastructure the Dublin Port Tunnel which needs to be utilised . Our bus services should connect Donabate and Portrane to Dublin Airport swiftly. Our bus services should allow those with mobility issues and Older persons to travel without having to change buses. Reducing direct and peak bus services from Dublin's commuter belt will not force commuters onto trains -there is simply not the capacity or the infrastructure- if able, they will drive.

Many thanks again for the significant work that has gone into this proposal. I very much welcome the overall goal to enable more people to get to more places sooner and the commitments to increase the bus services and the significant investment required to do this. However my submission outlined above is a strong reflection of the large amount of feedback I have received from constituents and I would like to see very serious consideration given to all the matters raised. Many thanks for taking the time to read my submission.

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