



Dublin Chamber Observations re Fitzwilliam Cycle Route Non-Statutory Public Consultation

Dublin Chamber, the representative body for over 1,300 businesses in the Greater Dublin Area, welcomes the opportunity to offer its observations on the proposed Fitzwilliam Cycle Route.

Dublin Chamber is supportive of the proposals. We believe that the creation of improved cycling facilities on Fitzwilliam Street would significantly enhance cyclist safety along the street and provide a considerably improved experience for all users of the street.

The National Transport Authority's proposed cycle route from Leeson Street Bridge to Holles Street Hospital, includes the introduction of buffered cycle lanes which would see cyclists protected from general traffic by parked cars. The changes would greatly benefit the businesses and the people who work in the Fitzwilliam Street area, as well as cyclists, and, makes a strong step towards the Chamber's vision of a city with a much safer cycle system, meaning cyclists no longer need to share space with buses and private vehicles.

This particular system has proven successful in other European cities including Amsterdam and Copenhagen, both of which can be considered as best in class when it comes to cycling infrastructure. Dublin Chamber believes that this is the type of infrastructure that Dublin should be aspiring to.

The popularity of cycling in Dublin is growing - a positive trend for the city. However, cycling in many parts of the city remains far too dangerous. The proposed Fitzwilliam Route is a move in the right direction.

The Fitzwilliam Street area is just one route among many that needs improved and safer cycle infrastructure.

Creating the cycle route would send a strong message that Dublin is ready to embrace the potential that exists to become a great city for cycling.

However, a failure to implement the proposed changes on Fitzwilliam Street would send a hugely negative message regarding how serious Dublin is about becoming a cycle-friendly city and addressing the current over-reliance on the private car within the M50.

A survey of our members in the summer of 2018 found that 63% of members have noticed an increase in the number of staff cycling to work¹ over the past year, while 88% are of the opinion that improved cycleways will make a positive difference to their staff and/or business.

Dublin Chamber is firm supporter of better cycling infrastructure in the city. The desire of Dubliners for a world-class network of safe cycling facilities was a key finding of the Chamber's Great Dublin Survey in 2017, which saw more than 20,000 people outline how they'd like to see their city develop and change over the coming years.

Dublin Chamber is proud to have partnered with the CyclingWorks Dublin campaign in July of this year, to call for the Government to significantly increase the amount of money it is spending on cycling infrastructure.

Currently, around 6%² of work commutes in Dublin are made by bike. In Copenhagen, that number exceeds 40%.

Since 2008, the number of people commuting into Dublin by bike has doubled to 12,000. This however, is in spite of infrastructure, not because of it.

Dublin Chamber believes that a 20% cycling share is possible in Dublin within 10 years, but only if we start investing properly in the cycling network.

It is a frustration of the business community in Dublin that very little of the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, launched in 2013, has come to fruition. If delivering the necessary cycleway infrastructure is not made a priority within the M50, then moves to develop a sustainable, more environmentally friendly and congestion-free city will be significantly hampered.

¹ Dublin Chamber Business Outlook Q2 2018

² Dublin Chamber Survey

In summary, creating the Fitzwilliam Cycle Route would be a real statement of intent by Dublin about how serious it is about becoming a safer city for cycling in. We hope that this opportunity will be embraced and that the Route will be progressed.