



Phase 1 Public Consultation Response Submission:
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
Active School Travel - New Safe Walking and Cycling Routes

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Date: 20 October 2020

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Executive Summary

The Belarmine Residents' Association represents 450 households within the estate of Belarmine Avenue, Belarmine Vale and Belarmine Way.

Association's area of concern includes

- (1) Belarmine Village with c.2,200 households across: Aikens Village, Belmont, Grianan Fidh, and high-density Park View, Woodside and Littlewoods developments.
- (2) Greater Stepside Area with a population of c. 20,000 residents.

The Association observes that

- Our area appears to be excluded from the proposed routes
- Our area needs to be connected to facilitate pedestrian and cycle access to Sandyford, Leopardstown, and further links to Stillorgan and Dundrum
- The current proposal is likely to facilitate further development for the areas that have already benefit from adequate road infrastructure and public transport.

The Association welcomes the initiative and highlights the current infrastructure challenges with

- Lack of easy pedestrian and cycle access to LUAS, and Leopardstown
- Insufficient bus capacity,
- Need to rely on private cars for school traffic,
- Severe road network deficiencies around Lamb Cross and Hillcrest Road,
- Rapidly worsening situation with the new construction activities.

Consultation Response Submission

The Belarmine Residents' Association (Stepaside, Dublin 18) have reviewed the above proposal and herewith wish to submit our observations.

Establishing and enhancing specific networks to facilitate safe pedestrian use and cycling is a great initiative, and we as residents' Association are fully supportive of the proposal in principle. By creating such routes, the use of environmentally sustainable and healthy & safe means of travel are promoted, and connectivity improved across our County.

In the context of the prevailing pandemic, cycling has proven to be a lower contagion-risk option for travelling to schools and work than public transport.

The proposal of three routes for connectivity to improve convenience of reach to e.g. schools, seems like an excellent idea; however, we do note with concern that somehow the Belarmine area appears excluded from the proposed routes.

Given that our area aligns with description of the key objectives provided in the '*Information and Engagement Booklet*', we sincerely hope that consideration will be given to extending one or more of these proposed routes to reach beyond the currently proposed points of termination to our area.

Objective 1: *'The proposed routes aim to connect quiet residential streets with existing safe walking and cycling infrastructure, to create a joined-up network.'*

Objective 2: *'At key places and to allow a connected safe network, some physical interventions are proposed, which include:*

- *changes to existing road crossings and junctions to increase safety for cycling and walking;*
- *new protected cycle paths; and*
- *changes to traffic movements.'*

1. **Density, demographic, demand and capacity**

- 1.1 The greater Stepside area is occupied by c.22,000 residents, with Belarmine accounting for about c.7,500 residents with more major high-density residential development currently underway.
- 1.2 A significant percentage of these households comprise of younger families with school-going age children.
- 1.3 While our Belarmine area has a number of schools within direct vicinity, the total capacity of these is inadequate to cope with demand, and as such, around 1,500 scholars attend schools further afield in Stillorgan, Dundrum, Goatstown: St. Raphaelas, Oatlands College, Colaiste Eion, St Killian's German, Our Lady's Grove.
- 1.4 Also, not all local families have the means to afford enrolment at local private schools, necessitating attendance at schools further afield.
- 1.5 Older children of our locality need to reach colleges such as UCD, Trinity, and DIT.

2. **Infrastructural inadequacy**

- 2.1 Due to significant infrastructural shortcomings to cope with the ever-increasing occupancy levels in this remote, high-density area, the roads network has become egregiously congested and the bus routes serving the area notoriously lacking in both capacity and frequency.

- 2.2 Means of connectivity other than by car are urgently needed to alleviate pressure from the network.
- 2.3 Cycling and walking could bring many local occupants within reach of places of education, work and recreation, yet the network currently falls short of some essential connection points to link Belarmine with Leopardstown, Sandyford, Stillorgan and beyond by foot or bicycle.

3. Need to improve connectivity and permeability

- 3.1 Lack of connectivity and permeability for cyclists and pedestrians are currently major shortcomings in the area, restricting flexibility/options as far as means of transport to places of education are concerned.
- 3.2 Of all closest vehicular crossing points over the M50, right now only the extension of Sandyford Road (R117) permits pedestrian and bicycle use. Given the current necessity to pass through Lambs Cross / Hillcrest Road to reach Sandyford Road (both of which are of inadequate width and composition for safe cycling), upgrading or creating appropriate infrastructure elsewhere for the intended 'joined-up network' is vital for our high-density, remote community allowing scholars to cycle safely.
- 3.3 We note with gratitude that works have commenced, allowing cyclist thoroughfare across the M50 at the interchange roundabout, which aligns with *Objective 2 of the Information and Engagement Booklet*'. Once completed, this should establish a vital point of connectivity which is now desperately lacking.
- 3.4 However, further south, permeability between local estates at some key points remains unresolved and through simple interventions, reach, and connectivity towards the M50 and beyond needs to be notably improved.
- 3.5 Such improvements would not only benefit scholars to reach schools and student colleges elsewhere, but vice versa improve ease of access to local educational facilities as well as our beautiful local recreational amenities: Fern Hill Estate and various access routes to Three Rock / Fairy Castle and beyond into the Dublin Mountains by bicycle or by foot.

4. Request for inclusion in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Active School Travel - New Safe Walking and Cycling Routes.

- 4.1 We observe that the contexts of the 3 No. proposed *Safe Walking and Cycling Routes* already benefit from high quality and capacity road networks, including bus lanes & various other means of public transport.
- 4.2 In addition, these areas are to gain dedicated enhanced cycling routes under this proposal, yet Stepside, which lacks most of the benefits cited under Item 4.1, has been excluded.
- 4.3 In line with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council's objective of establishing a joined-up network, we request that the greater Stepside area be included in *The New Safe Walking and Cycling* initiative.

5. Proposed points of permeability facilitating implementation.

- 5.1 From below map, it is evident that permeability falls short in the direction of most schools beyond those within the direct vicinity (*points of permeability indicated with green ticks and potential / former points of permeability with red crosses*).



- 5.2 In order for such *New Safe Walking and Cycling Routes* to be established, current points of obstruction will have to be made permeable.
- 5.3 **1 on map: Connecting pedestrian / cycling route between Atkinson Drive and Belmont Drive with Old Kilgobbin Road.**

This point of permeability is essential to achieve connectivity in line with the proposed cycling route map below.

Thoroughfare at this point will also in future be essential to reach a number of bus routes according to the *Bus Connects* proposal, leading to destinations which will no longer be served by buses through Stepside and to Belamine.



5.4 **2 on map: Connecting from Gaelscoil Thaobh na Coille through Richardson's land to Kilgobbin Road.**

Thoroughfare at this point will provide connectivity to Kilgobbin Road and align with the planned cycle route / greenway, connecting to the newly opened Cruagh Greenway through Clay Farm, leading to schools in Ballyogan and beyond.

5.5 **3 on map: Former pedestrian route from Cluain Shee across Village Road through Aiken's Village now blocked by ongoing development.**

We understand that this is a temporary closure due to ongoing construction works and that the route will be reinstated on completion.

5.6 **4 on map: Pedestrian gate at western corner of Aiken's Village.**

This gate was permanently blocked up, severing permeability through Aiken's Village, forcing egress via Village Road. Note that this route of permeability if reinstated, will only benefit the wider area in conjunction with the route described in Item 5.5. above.

Should a new *Safe Walking and Cycling Route* be successfully established through point **1** on the map (refer to Item 5.3 above), thoroughfare via points **2** & **3** will be of less importance