

**Mr Jack Chambers, T.D.**  
**Dáil Éireann**  
**Kildare Street**  
**Dublin 2 - D02 A272**

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017

Dear Deputy

I am writing to you concerning the matters you raised in Parliamentary Question Nos. 608 on 9 May and 546 on 16 May last to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, which have been referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) for attention.

The expansion programme for the *dublinbikes* scheme is set out in Dublin City Council's *Dublin Bikes Strategic Planning Framework* document. This document sets out a phased approach to expansion to ensure continuity of coverage with no gaps in the scheme extent. However, given the costs involved there are no proposals to proceed with an expansion to west Dublin at the present time.

In 2012 the NTA prepared a report on the possible provision of bike share schemes in urban centre locations in the Dublin region outside of the City Centre. The analysis in that report states:

*"Subject to further analysis and economic appraisal, it is considered that there may not be sufficient demand for a bike rental scheme to operate successfully within Blanchardstown. This preliminary assessment is based on;*

- *the main employment destinations are Blanchardstown Shopping Centre and Westend Retail Park, which both facilitate a very high percentage of car based trips;*
- *there is not a significant mix of uses within the area; apart from Blanchardstown Shopping Centre and Westend Retail Park, the area is predominantly residential;*
- *possible destination points such as Connolly Hospital, the National Aquatic Centre or IT Blanchardstown, all suffer from very high levels of severance and are remote from other potential destination points;*
- *the relatively low no. of employment destinations in Blanchardstown;*
- *the relatively low no. of cultural, tourist and leisure destinations within Blanchardstown; and*
- *the severance effect of the M50, N3, Royal Canal and the Rail Line.*

*In essence the relatively low number of destination points, the dominance of one destination point (Blanchardstown Shopping Centre), the severance effect (of the road network, rail line and Royal Canal) and the primarily residential nature of the area, would not support one of the various basic requirements to locate bike stations within 250-400 metres apart.*

*This would make the operation of a bike rental scheme problematic and therefore it is considered that Blanchardstown may not be a suitable location for a bike rental scheme."*

Bike share schemes are expensive to install and expensive to operate. The largest component of operating cost is the manual redistribution of bikes between stations. In an ideal situation there would be an equal number of people taking bikes out from a station as there would be people bringing bikes back to the station. Such an arrangement ensures bike availability for other people who want to hire bikes from the station, and empty spots for people who want to return bikes.

However, in practice there is rarely such a balanced flow and more bikes get hired from one station than get returned or, alternatively, there are more people seeking to return the bikes to a station than there are spaces available. To deal with these imbalances, a system of manual bike distribution is required.

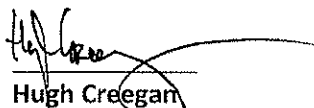
This manual redistribution system is expensive to operate. There is a significant cost for trucks and drivers, particularly for an operation that runs 7 days a week from 6am to 12.30am. In the case of Blanchardstown and Dublin 15, the requirement for manual redistribution of bikes would be more significant than for the City Centre, where there is a reasonable level of "self-distribution" by users.

While the NTA could provide support for the initial capital costs of some extensions, it is not in a position to financially support the continued operational cost associated with such extensions. The relevant local authority would, therefore, need to identify how the operational costs could be funded before consideration of any such extension could be undertaken.

In view of the foregoing the NTA does not consider that west Dublin and Dublin 15 is an appropriate area for the introduction of a bike share scheme at the present time.

I regret the delay in replying.

Yours sincerely



**Hugh Creegan**

Director of Transport Investment & Taxi Regulation