

14th April 2020

Dear Mayor, Chief Executive, and Operations Director of Services,

We are writing as a Green Party group to request that Fingal County Council reallocates road space to walking and cycling during the pandemic. We suggest that the CPG, the Chief Executive and the Operations Director of Services discuss what might be possible and that the Operations Director of Services then goes ahead in a number of locations.

The response of the Council to the COVID-19 challenge has been excellent, with resources rightly directed to preserving essential services and ensuring the safety of the Council's staff and Fingal's citizens.

As movement restrictions continue and car traffic numbers remain at a fraction of the pre-pandemic levels, the Council has an opportunity to improve things further and reduce the risk from the high speeds seen on some roads by reallocating road space to:

- a) make social distancing easier for those walking or cycling to shops or essential work,
- b) make local, urban cycling and walking safer for those who are exercising within their 2km zone, especially those with prams or wheelchairs,
- c) trial street and road measures which may be useful after the pandemic, including for public health reasons.

Such measures have been already rolled out elsewhere, such as:

- **Germany:** Berlin has added temporary marked bike lanes, directly replacing car lanes ([source](#))
- **Hungary:** Budapest is rolling out a network of temporary bike lanes in the city centre ([source](#))
- **Canada:** Vancouver have turned well-trafficked roads into one way streets, setting aside a temporary extra lane for walking and cycling ([source](#)). Calgary has taken a similar approach ([video](#)). Winnipeg has fully closed several central and suburban streets to through traffic with cones, signs and bollards (all temporary), creating spaces for exercise ([source](#)).
- **Mexico:** Mexico City has started an "emergency bike lane" network ([source](#))
- **USA:** Washington DC has seen unofficial "pandemic pavement" widenings ([source](#)), with cities such as Brookline MA using cones to make lanes for walking ([source](#))
- **UK:** Hackney Council has rolled out filtering measures to slow/reduce traffic in residential areas ([source](#))



Over sixty local authorities worldwide have taken such measures, with [an ad-hoc database available here](#).

Measures such as the above could be taken in towns in Fingal, including:

- cones, or, better, planters, to widen footpaths in town/village centres or outside trafficked shops/queue areas (in the centres of Malahide, Portmarnock and Swords, for example);
- implementing one-way systems to allow the placing of planters or cones to make wider footpaths (coastal road in Skerries, for example);
- temporary use of planters, cones or bollards to create quietways to stop through traffic in housing estates and make streets and roads for play/exercise;
- temporary street or road pedestrianisation;
- signs indicating improved pedestrian priority at junctions, reducing risk of transmission via crossing buttons.

Our understanding is that such measures would be allowable on a temporary basis in response to the pandemic, or on longer-term footing under section 38 of the Road Traffic Act, 1994.

These suggestions have come from constituents, who have flagged difficulties and extra needs they have during the pandemic. As social distancing seems likely to continue for several months, such measures could ease these difficulties and frustrations greatly. In addition to the examples above, the PPN and local residents' groups will have other examples of locations where these measures could be undertaken.

We fully understand that the council faces huge pressures and financial uncertainty. The first priority must be the safety of staff and the public, followed by financial stability.

However, this is also an excellent chance to trial low or zero-cost methods which would dramatically improve the public realm for those who live in the county.

Yours sincerely,

Cllrs. Ian Carey, Pamela Conroy, David Healy, Karen Power, Daniel Whooley