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**17th November 2026**

**An Coimisiún Pleanála,**
**64 Marlborough Street,**
**Dublin 1,**
**D01 V902**

**Re: Appeal in relation to LRD0068/S3E, Belcamp, decision by Fingal County Council**

A chairde,

I wish to appeal the above decision on the following grounds:

1. **Need for Local Area Plan/ Urban Area Plan/ Priority Area Plan**

This area was zoned with a requirement for a Local Area Plan (LAP) in the 2017 Fingal Development Plan. Unfortunately, that requirement was removed in the 2023 Plan. When the material alteration to remove Belcamp from the schedule of LAPs to be prepared was put on public display, the National Transport Authority (NTA), Planning Regulator (OPR) and Fingal's Chief Executive all recommended that it be retained.

This area is of such scale that a LAP is needed to address the various interacting issues that relate to it. A Local Area Plan would have made provision consistent with the Fingal Development Plan policy as regards "compact and sustainable settlement patterns" (p.204) and the RSES's Guiding Principle as regards "10 minute settlements" (p.187).

The main issues inadequately addressed in the application process and which would have been expected to be addressed in a Local Area Plan are still to be resolved. The biggest element of the challenge of handling this application without an LAP is ensuring that the development is consistent with policy as regards (public) transport-oriented development. NTA and OPR, in recommending that the requirement for an LAP be retained in the Fingal Development Plan, expressed the view that such forward planning was required for adequate transport infrastructure and for transport-oriented development.

In its request for further information, Fingal County Council asked for a Masterplan covering the applicant's overall landholding at Belcamp. No Masterplan as such was produced. The response focussed on transport modelling, which while very valuable in setting out the implications of the

development as proposed, does not substitute for the Local Area Plan previously required or for what would be an Urban Area Plan (UAP) or a Priority Area Plan (PAP) under the current legislation.

In the current circumstances, where the appropriate forward planning hasn't happened, An Coimisiún Pleanála has to engage with these inadequately addressed issues in this planning application. The important transport infrastructure and transport-oriented development questions which would have been addressed in a LAP are inevitably now required to be addressed within this file. If the Commission considers that the constraints of the LRD process don't enable it to engage fully with these issues, including by involving the NTA appropriately, one option might be to give permission for the first phase only and recommend a UAP, PAP or Coordinated Area Plan be developed for the full site and overall area.

## 2. Transport-oriented Development

This appeal starts with an agreement that this area is appropriately zoned for development. The area is on the fringe of the existing urban area and has the potential to be developed in a public transport-oriented way. However, judged on its own evidence, this application is for unsustainable, car-dependent development. Therefore it needs significant modification. Whether that is possible within the scope of the current application is a technical issue for the Commission to consider.

The current public transport provision to the site is very poor. It is unusual in Fingal in that respect. The Parking Zones 1 and 2 set out in the Fingal Development Plan provide an easy reckoner for public transport access, and unlike most of the zoned land in Fingal, almost all of this site is in Zone 2 (i.e. lacking quality public transport access.) The proposed parking provision reflects this.

Note the Fingal Development Plan requirements as to phasing:

> *14.9.1 Phasing of Development*
>
> *Developments over 100 residential units shall demonstrate that adequate provision for specified physical and social infrastructural requirements, including: roads, sewers, water mains, community, recreational and sporting facilities (indoor and outdoor), public transport, schools and shops are available at completion to support development.*

Regional and national policy point in the same direction.

Measure PLAN1 of the adopted Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022–2042 (p. 54) is to the same effect as regards transport. Large planning applications should be accompanied by Transport Assessments setting out how public transport, walking and cycling together can cater for the majority of travel demand, with a statement of the infrastructure and services required to achieve this and an agreed phasing programme for its provision. On the applicant's own forecast of a 53–56% car mode share (section 2.2 below), PLAN1 is not yet achieved.

The Guiding Principles on the Integration of Land Use and Transport of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region (p. 187) state that within the Dublin Metropolitan Area, except in limited planned circumstances, significant levels of development should not occur in locations not well served by existing or proposed high capacity public transport. RPO 4.3 requires the development of future development areas to be co-ordinated with the delivery of public transport projects, and RPO 5.3 requires future development in the Metropolitan Area to be planned and designed to facilitate sustainable travel patterns, with a particular focus on walking, cycling and public transport.

The revised National Planning Framework (April 2025) identifies the constant catch-up of infrastructure and services at the edges of cities as a cause of "remarkably high levels of car dependence" (p. 20), and National Policy Objectives 10 and 97 call for Transport Orientated Development served by high capacity public transport.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) and the Council's own Transportation Planning Section reached the same view of the application as lodged. In its submission of 26 January 2026, the NTA stated that the application had not demonstrated how public transport, walking and cycling would cater for the majority of trips in line with Measure PLAN3, recommended an Area-Based Transport Assessment leading to an agreed Local Transport Plan, warned that the future population could be car dependent for everyday trips, and concluded that the application was not in alignment with the Transport Strategy.

The Transportation Planning Section's report of 9 February 2026 likewise found the proposal premature pending an Area Based Transport Assessment and Local Transport Plan prepared with Dublin City Council and the NTA, and considered that the development would be over-reliant on the private car.

The analysis done by the applicant in response to the Further Information request hasn't served to allay the concerns raised by the NTA and Fingal's Transportation Planning Section. It has demonstrated that those concerns are correct.

In these circumstances, An Coimisiún Pleanála should ensure that it gives effect to the accumulation of policy at national, regional and county level which commits the planning system to integrating public transport infrastructure into urban development proposals by means of public transport-oriented development.

I welcome conditions 7 and 8 of the Council's decision, which prevent Phases 2 and 3 from commencing until the North-South Link Road, the R139 cycle track, the BusConnects proposals PT1 to PT4 (including the N8 orbital service) and an NTA high-frequency bus service into the development are in place. These conditions should be retained. However, they leave Phase 1, comprising 520 homes, a 204-place crèche and the non-residential floorspace, free to be built and occupied with no public transport serving the site: the NTA notes that the nearest bus stop is about 800m from the core of the development and the nearest rail station almost 3km away at Clongriffin.

The decision also contains no condition responding to the NTA's recommendation that the requirements for a future Luas service within the site be considered.

### 2.1 Difficulties engaging with the analysis done

The EIAR on p. 6-14 (section 6.7) states "The Eastern Regional Model has been used to assess the effects of the Proposed Development. The future year 'Do Minimum' scenarios include future LDP development, and the transport schemes listed above. Further details are provided below."

On page 6.16 (section 6.8.2.4) it states "Future year 2028 'Do Minimum' traffic flows calculated using the ERM strategic model (see Section 6.7.2) have been used in the assessment."

Section 6.7.2 is a description of current and planned public transport and contains no information on the transport modelling.

### 2.2 Inconsistency with high-level climate and modal split goals.

In general, this proposal, as evidenced by the transport and climate elements of the EIAR and Local Transport Plan, is forecast to result in a modal split and transport emissions levels incompatible with the objectives of the Climate Action Plan and inconsistent with the forecasts in the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042 (GDATS.)

The applicant forecasts a 56% car modal share in 2028 and a 53% car modal share in 2043.

This can be compared with the GDATS, which forecasts that car mode share in Metropolitan Dublin will fall from 52.4% in 2016 to 41.9% in 2042. The Strategy notes that this does not yet include the demand management measures to be introduced under Measure CLIMATE2, which will reduce car mode share further.

These figures indicate that rather than doing better than existing adjacent suburban areas, this new area will be more car-dependent. Rather than improving the overall modal share in the metropolitan area, it will worsen it.

A failure to meet the NTA's modal share targets will entrain a failure to meet the congestion objectives of the GDA Transport Strategy and a failure to meet the predicted greenhouse gas emissions associated with the Strategy.

The Climate Action Plan aims for a 20% reduction in total vehicle-kilometres travelled by 2030, relative to business as usual. According to the Climate Change Advisory Council's Annual Review 2026: Transport (June 2026), the transport sector's emissions ceiling of 37 $MtCO_2eq$ for 2026–2030 is projected to be exceeded by 17.7 Mt under existing measures, and by 12.5 Mt even with additional measures.

The evidence in the EIAR and supporting analysis demonstrates that this is a business-as-usual car dependent residential development and that it is incompatible with the Climate Action Plan and carbon budgets. Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended) requires the Commission, in so far as practicable, to perform its functions in a manner consistent with the most recent approved Climate Action Plan, the National Climate Objective and the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. In Coolglass Wind Farm Ltd v An Coimisiún Pleanála [2026] IESC 5, the Supreme Court held that this is a binding legal obligation, enforceable by the courts, which requires more than having regard to those objectives and applies to any decision to grant or refuse permission (paras. 118 and 156). The qualification "in so far as practicable" does not permit mere matters of convenience to be taken into account (para. 118(iv)). National Policy Objective 69 of the revised National Planning Framework likewise requires climate action to be integrated into the planning system in support of the targets in the most recently adopted carbon budgets.

This appeal doesn't claim to advance a full set of solutions to be adopted in order to give effect to the adopted policies as regards transport-oriented development and in order to achieve consistency as required by s.15 of the Climate Act. However, it will make reference to some important aspects.

### 2.3 Light rail provision/reservations/alignments

There is a strong argument that light rail should be included in the public transport provision in this area.

### 2.3.1 Radial light rail

The GDA Transport Strategy 2022–2042 incorporates radial light rail routes reflecting the demand identified in the Modelling Report. Measure LRT7 commits the NTA to detailed appraisal, planning and design work during the Strategy period on Luas lines from the City Centre to Clongriffin and from the City Centre to Beaumont and "Balgriffin" (actually marked on the NTA's map as terminating in the townland of Clonshaugh or Belcamp), for delivery after 2042. On the Strategy's Post-2042 Light Rail Network map (Figure 12.7), the "Balgriffin" line terminates adjacent to these lands.

The development of this land and in particular the capacity problems which are forecast for the D-spine bus service (7.3.1 of the Belcamp Area Based Transport Assessment) strengthen the case for the radial Luas lines to Clongriffin (via the Malahide Road) and via Beaumont to "Balgriffin" (Belcamp) provided for in Measure LRT7 of the Transport Strategy. However, this seems not to have been analysed in consideration of the application to date, even by the NTA.

### 2.3.2 Orbital light rail

I have recommended for many years that a public transport reservation be provided through this land to facilitate an orbital light rail or metro connection between Clongriffin and the Metrolink (previously Metro North) station to be built at Dardistown. This reservation/indicative alignment was included in the draft of the 2017 Fingal Development Plan when it went on public display in 2016. Unfortunately, following the consultation, it was then removed from the draft before adoption on foot of advice that such a reservation should be based on detailed analysis.

The issue of this orbital public transport route was then included in the terms of reference for the South Fingal Transport Study (SFTS) https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2019-03/South%20Fingal%20Transport%20Study%20Jan%202019_0.pdf carried out by SYSTRA.

That Study reached the following conclusions:

> **Fingal/Dublin Fringe – Dublin Airport – Swords Bus Route**
>
> The modelling analysis in the ERM shows there is strong demand for an orbital public transport route running between Clongriffin, Dublin Airport and Swords with the future land uses assumed for the SFTS. In addition to the bus services proposed by the NTA GDA Strategy, it is recommended that this future orbital connectivity is provided to help reduce car dependency for trips not travelling to the city, but to major employment areas potentially along the R139. It will also serve Dublin Airport and Swords, where large scale future employment generating developments will be driven by MetroLink but will attract trips from the wider areas including from Fingal/Dublin Fringe.
>
> The level of demand suggests a high frequency bus service (every five to ten minutes) would be required to meet peak period demand. However, a relatively direct and reliable service would require the development of the EWLR Clonshaugh section and a link over the M1

to Dublin Airport, either by completing the suggested public transport only link over the M1 Dublin Airport spur interchange, or by providing the full EWLR. The relative costs and benefits of these alternatives would have to be carefully assessed.
However, a review of the NTA GDA Strategy is due to be undertaken by the end of 2022, at which point it would timely to assess the potential inclusion of the proposed orbital bus service for delivery post 2027.

**SFTS Recommendation 24:** To further consider the feasibility of a Fingal/Dublin Fringe – Dublin Airport – Swords Bus Route when Bus Connects and MetroLink are more advanced. The current phases of planning for these projects must give priority to those services already identified in the NTA GDA Strategy 2016-2035.

Unfortunately, the GDA Strategy review didn't get into the level of detail which the SFTS recommended.

It did however identify in its Transport Strategy Development and Modelling Report that demand levels on the Malahide Road corridor will be appropriate to a light rail service.

In addition, that report noted both the importance of light rail for growth areas including the area of which Belcamp forms a part, and the potential requirement for orbital routes:

> *It is recognised that Luas is ideal for serving key growth areas Clonburris, North Fringe, Adamstown, and the Airport and integrates well with Park and Ride. However significant challenges associated with the Luas include achieving the alignments tested and integrating the lines outside the city centre, which could in time require an Orbital system.*

(As I can't find the Transport Strategy Development and Modelling Report online, I attach it as an appendix to this appeal and have put it online myself at https://davidhealy.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/GDATS-Transport-Strategy-Development-and-Modelling-Report.pdf )

The correct approach to transport-oriented development, of course, is to plan for the public transport link in tandem with the forward planning for the urban development and to provide the public transport link in advance of occupation of the houses.

As I mentioned, this residential area was to be subject to a Local Area Plan. I intended to propose in the LAP process that the Plan provide for a light rail/metro reservation/alignment through these lands to form a link between the Malahide Road/ Clongriffin light rail proposal and the Metrolink proposal.

The decision should, at a minimum, require that the design of the proposed development is such that an orbital section of light rail/metro route can be included in the overall development. The NTA itself recommended, in its submission on the application, that the requirements for a Luas service within the site be considered; the Council's decision does not address this.

### 2.4 Bus services

The proposed provision of a frequent orbital bus service along the EWLR (either as a general road or as a restricted public transport and active travel route) over the M1 in the vicinity of Dardistown cemetery, is referred to in the South Fingal Transport Study already quoted above:

> The level of demand suggests a high frequency bus service (every five to ten minutes) would be required to meet peak period demand. However, a relatively direct and reliable service would require the development of the EWLR Clonshaugh section and a link over the M1 to Dublin Airport, either by completing the suggested public transport only link over the M1 Dublin Airport spur interchange, or by providing the full EWLR.

Although the transport report here is by the same consultants, it makes no reference to this potential link; instead the possible bus routes mentioned are routed on a convoluted path northwards along an unsuitable Stockhole Lane, with no explanation of what has happened to this previous route.

The adopted Transport Strategy notes that additional orbital services are likely to be required to serve emerging development areas (p. 116). The layout should be designed to accommodate such an orbital route. The 2022 GDA Cycle Network Plan (Dublin North Central sheet) likewise identifies a crossing of the M1 here, between Clonshaugh Road and Old Airport Road, for further study.

The transport report accompanying the application shows the D-spine exceeding crush capacity north of the Malahide Road/Northern Cross Junction already in 2028. It doesn't set out the impact of this on the D-spine further south, nor what extra levels of bus service would be justified. As mentioned above, nor does it consider the implications of this level of demand for the light rail proposals in the area.

A development of this scale (1348 housing units, with more to come across the river in Dublin City Council) should be integrated with the bus network in a coordinated manner. The permission should ensure that bus routes effectively serve this area from the start. Condition 8 of the Council's decision secures this for Phases 2 and 3 only. For Phase 1, the Commission should require an interim bus service, such as the shuttle bus to Clongriffin identified as an option in the applicant's own Traffic and Transport Assessment, to operate from first occupation until the services required by condition 8 are operational.

All of the light rail and bus issues raised above would have been, and presumably could still be, effectively addressed in a Local Area Plan, Urban Area Plan, or Coordinated Area Plan.

### 2.5 Car-dominated nature of the proposed layout; potential for freeing residential areas from car parking

The proposed layout is highly car-dominated. Front gardens will be entirely given over to car parking and the visual and social impression will be of living in a car park. This will be a hostile environment for vulnerable road users especially for children. The obvious alternative is to provide for car-free neighbourhoods, as encouraged by the Fingal Development Plan, whereby car parking would be in dedicated car parks on the edge of the residential areas.

The argument made in this regard in my observation seems not to have been engaged with at all. However, Fingal County Council propose exactly this approach in the recently adopted Dunsink Urban Area Plan:

> Collective parking facilities are proposed near main access and distributor streets, minimising traffic through residential areas.

I recommend that the layout be revised on this basis.

### 2.6 Layout to prioritise walking and cycling

The RSES Guiding Principles (p. 187) require new development areas, including peripheral areas, to be permeable for walking and cycling, with filtered permeability where possible and regard to DMURS, and National Policy Objective 37 requires safe and convenient alternatives to the car to be integrated into the design of communities by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility.

The design doesn't comply with the requirements of DMURS in terms of walking priority at junctions. Generally, the layout has been devised primarily to facilitate car access rather than to prioritise separate walking and cycling access. This area could be laid out with the sort of separate walking/cycling network seen in Houten, in which the active travel modes get priority every time their routes cross with motorised modes. I recommend that the layout be revised on this basis.

The conditions decided by the Council, in particular condition 15, may be considered to partly address this. However, I don't consider that this condition would facilitate a fundamental rethinking of the priority of active travel in line with the recommendation I made of following best practice, taking Houten as an example. A redesign of the layout could be submitted to ACP for evaluation by way of a further information request.

### 2.7 Insufficiency of retail provision

Only 835m$^2$ of retail space (proposed to be divided into 2 units, or, in response to the RFI, potentially into 4 or 5 units) is proposed for a development of 1348 housing units. The withdrawn application had 18 retail units and 3 cafés/restaurants. I can't find any justification in the planning statement for this proposed approach which is directly contrary to the planning policies set out in the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and Fingal Development Plan.

Measures PLAN5 and PLAN8 of the Transport Strategy support retail and an appropriate mix of uses within major residential development areas. The RSES identifies the North Fringe as a strategic development area whose intended outcome is the completion of mixed-use districts with retail and service provision (Table 5.1), and its Land Use and Transport Guiding Principles (p.187) support the '10 minute' settlement concept, with a range of community facilities and services accessible within short walking and cycling times from homes.

In my initial observation I noted:

> Access to supermarkets from these new houses will be very difficult. Public transport will not link directly. Cycling will require existing hostile junctions and roads to be navigated. Walking will involve excessive distances. Driving will be the forced choice, requiring car ownership for

residents, but will require use of already congested roads, adding to the already considerable congestion.

(In response to the further information request there are now direct bus links to Clarehall, required for Phases 2 and 3; the other comments stand.)

Fingal County Council's further information question 5 asked the applicant to comply with a 15-minute city approach. In response, the applicant specifically implies that residents should instead travel to the Clare Hall shopping centre area:

> The scale of the units has been carefully considered having regard to the site's proximity to the established retail offering at Clarehall Shopping Centre which includes a Tesco Extra with an approximate gross floor area of 3,500sq.m. It is also noted that a post office, pharmacy, bookshop, laundry services, doctors' surgery, dental surgery, butchers, opticians, health food store, psychotherapist and chiropodist are catered for within the existing centre along with many other retail and food offerings.

The closest part of the site is over 20 minutes' walk to Clarehall including a very pedestrian-hostile major junction; most is much further away. Effectively the developer is saying that people will be expected to drive to access most services. Unfortunately, Fingal County Council considered this response "generally acceptable" and appear to have abandoned the 15-minute city approach.

### 2.8 Absence of employment uses

In line with 15-minute city principles, the development should provide space for small-scale employment uses. Although this was raised in my observation, Fingal County Council didn't address it.

## 3. Proposed Greenway Design

The 2022 Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan (Dublin North Central sheet) designates this route as a "Greenway – Utility" route, as distinct from a leisure greenway. It runs east–west through these lands from Clonshaugh Road to the Malahide Road and on towards Belmayne and Balgriffin, with a crossing of the M1 identified for further study.

In an area with high population and very cycling-hostile existing road infrastructure, the proposed Greenway will ultimately serve as an important east-west link, especially when the connection over the M1 motorway is made. It should be designed with segregation of people walking and cycling, or, at a minimum, with a sufficient reservation retained to enable that segregation to be retrofitted.

## 4. Childcare provision

Given the repeated experience of developers of new residential areas, who are required by the planning system to provide locations for childcare, subsequently not managing to find childcare providers to use the spaces, I recommend that a relevant condition require the handing over of the spaces required in this permission to Fingal County Council, so that it can identify and reach agreement with childcare providers. This reflects NPF National Policy Objective 41, which prioritises the provision and timely delivery of childcare facilities as a key enabler for housing development,

and RPO 9.20 of the RSES on the supply of sufficient childcare places. Condition 5(a) of the Council's decision requires a second crèche in Phase 2, which I welcome; the concern about delivery and operation applies to both facilities.

### 5. Embodied carbon

The EIAR (Ch.14), reflecting proposed use of timber frame construction for houses but not apartments or duplexes, gives figures of 500 $kgCO_2e/m^2$ for typical houses, 1150 $kgCO_2e/m^2$ for typical apartments, and 1171 to 1184 $kgCO_2e/m^2$ for typical duplexes, along with significant biogenic carbon storage for houses but not for the other building types.

The developer should be required to achieve comparable results for the apartments and duplexes as for houses, specifically the RIAI 2030 Climate Challenge target of 625 $kgCO_2e/m^2$ for residential buildings. https://www.riai.ie/discover-architecture/riai-publications/riai-2030-climate-challenge

### 6. District Heating

With the construction of the nearby "Greater Dublin Drainage" major wastewater treatment plant https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/case/312131 adjacent to Belcamp, the feasibility of using waste heat from the treatment plant to supply space heating and hot water for this residential area should be examined through a further information request. If necessary, an appropriate condition should be included in the decision.

### 7. Solar electricity

The permission should include a condition aimed at ensuring that photovoltaic panels are installed on all houses and apartment buildings with suitable roofs. The condition could require details to be agreed with the planning authority.

Thank you for considering the above grounds of appeal.

Best regards,

David Healy

Cllr. David Healy

Attachments:

- NTA's Transport Strategy Development and Modelling Report for the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy Review
- South Fingal Transport Study (split in two parts for uploading)
- RIAI 2030 Climate Challenge (October 2021)