

PRESS RELEASE

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GOVT ANNOUNCES CITY-BIKE SYMPOSIUMS FOR CORK, GALWAY, LIMERICK & WATERFORD

- *Public Bike Schemes Possible with Private Sector Partnership – Minister Kelly*

The Taoiseach, Enda Kenny along with Public Transport Minister, Alan Kelly, have announced a series of public bike symposiums to be held in regional cities in an effort to secure private sector support for city bike schemes outside of Dublin.

Public bike schemes, including Dublin bikes, allow bicycle users to pick up and drop off bikes at different points inside a city for a relatively low charge. A commitment to explore the possibility of rolling this scheme out to the regional cities was made in the programme for Government.

Speaking today, the Taoiseach said: “The Dublinbikes Scheme has been a resounding success and is internationally acknowledged as one of the most successful in Europe. This Government believes that public bike schemes in our other regional cities would enhance the city centres and provide a great boost to the cycling cultures already developing there.”

Organised with the National Transport Authority, a separate symposium will be held in each city with a view to examine combined funding mechanisms for city bike schemes in the regional cities. A commercial study into the scheme by the NTA reveals that while the scheme is feasible, the funding model that makes the scheme work in Dublin cannot be applied to the other regional cities and alternatives must be found.

Minister Kelly stated: “Given the current constraints on government funding, we have to look at alternative funding mechanisms and to business, civic and community groups for ideas and proposals. Getting involved in say Galway bikes or Cork bikes could be a wonderful opportunity for the right partner to get involved and share in the success in what could be an iconic way of travelling in these cities and would be supportive of a Government initiative.”

“Introducing public bike schemes to these cities is feasible and there have been some initial expressions of interest from the private sector who are interested in coming on board. Dublinbikes, which has seen more than 2.6m passenger journeys in Dublin in just 2 years, gives an idea of the potential for these schemes to take off,” stated Minister Kelly.

The preliminary cost of building and running the bike schemes across four cities for fifteen years is in the region of €30 million between current and capital costs at current market conditions.

Today’s announcement follows the publication of two separate reports commissioned by the National Transport Authority (NTA) to consider the introduction of public bike schemes in the regional cities.

Gerry Murphy, CEO of the National Transport Authority said: “The technical report considers the potential scope and on-the-ground logistics of schemes in each city and the commercial

report considers funding, cost and revenue analysis and options. The findings and content of both documents will underpin and inform the symposiums' discussions and the reports and summaries are available from today on the National Transport Authority's website (<http://www.nationaltransport.ie/citybikes.html>) and are also accessible via links from the Department's website (www.dttas.ie)."

Notes for Editors:

Indicative capital costs to set up the schemes in the four proposed cities are challenging at €6.4 million with operating costs estimated at €23 million over a 15 year period. The initial €23 million estimated figure would break down at over €7 million for Cork and just under €4million each for Galway, Waterford and Limerick with €4.5 million control room costs.

The four Bike Symposiums aim to inform and engage with interested parties, gauging the appetite locally for the scheme, communicating the issues involved and providing a defined channel via the National Transport Authority, which any interested parties can avail of to discuss an interest openly or in commercial confidence.

Symposiums will be held in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford in the coming weeks to get ideas, input and evaluate support at a local level.

City	Date	Venue
Cork	7 th November	Millennium Hall, City Hall
Waterford	9 th November	The Large Room, City Hall
Limerick	14 th November	Limerick City Gallery of Art, Pery Square
Galway	15 th November	Arts Millennium Building, NUI Galway

Public Bike Schemes can bring a wide-range of visible benefits to cities. Not only are they a quick way to travel short journeys, they are cheaper on the pocket, they are a sustainable means of transport and not only do they result in a reduction in traffic, they can attract tourists and provide other options for public transport.

Dublinbikes is widely recognised as one of the most successful bike share rental schemes in the world. It currently has over 63,000 subscribers (of which almost two thirds hold long term subscriptions) and 2.6 million journeys have been taken since launch. On 13 Oct 2011 the scheme reached yet another rental record. 7,052 journeys were taken on the bikes, meaning each bike was rented an average of 13 times.

The last census showed that over 200,000 of us drive less than 4 kilometres to work. To incentivise people to not use their cars, we have to make walkways, cycle paths and the road network more user-friendly. Public bike schemes make cycling more visible and therefore safer, provide more transport choice in city centres and enhance people's experience of their city proving a win-win for the public and for business.