



**Determination of whether a Public Service Obligation exists
as a result of the suspension of some 4 / X4 services from
New Ross and Waterford**

October 2022

1. Introduction

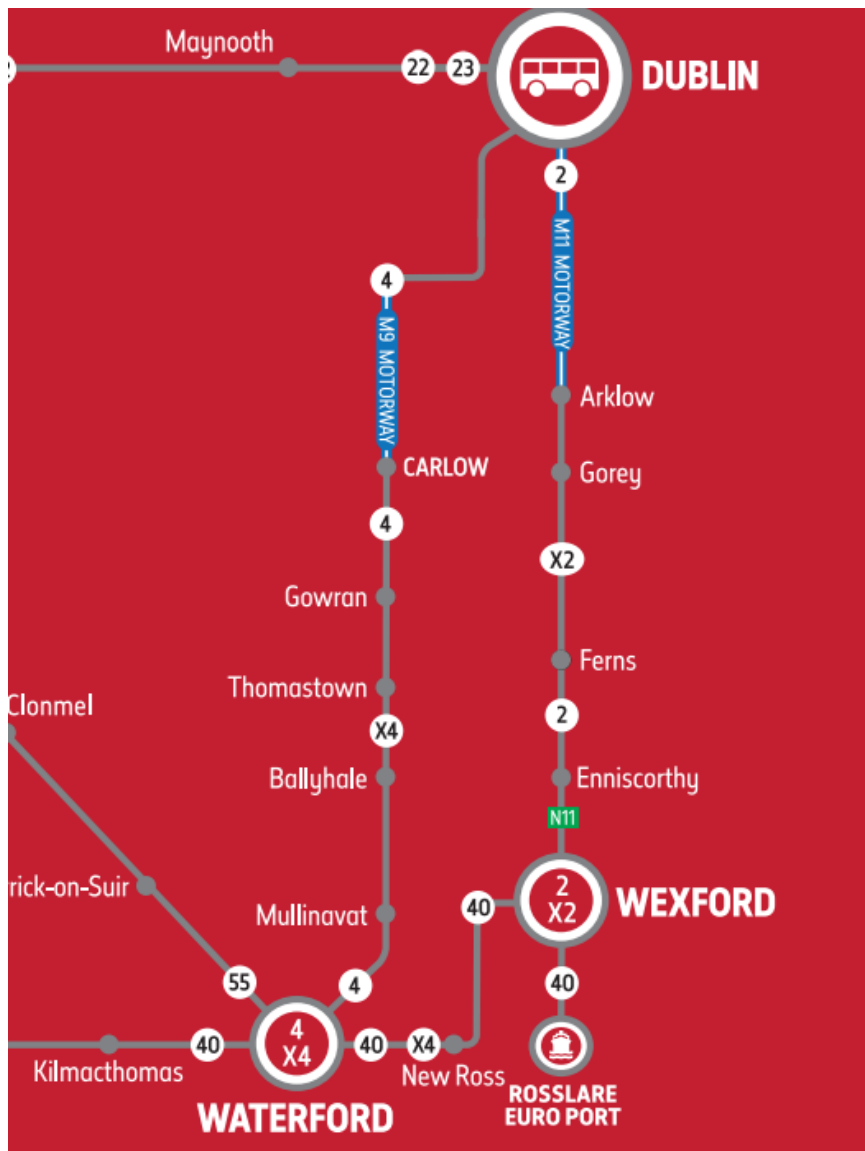
Introduction

On the 17th of October 2022 Bus Éireann Expressway (BÉ Expressway) informed the National Transport Authority (the NTA) that they would be introducing changes to their 4 / X4 Dublin – Waterford / New Ross services. They informed the Authority that these changes will come into effect on the 1st of November 2022 and said that the requested suspensions are a response to “low levels of passenger demand” on these services.

This note determines whether there is a Public Service Obligation (PSO) resulting from these changes, or whether the existing transport options in the area are sufficient to cater for local demand, taking into account socio-economic considerations.

2. Route 4 / X4 and other services in the area

The current route of the 4 / X4 is shown on the diagram below. Other key routes, such as the 2 / X2 and the 40, are also shown.



3. The impact of the proposed changes

The 4 / X4 route provides passengers with a two and a half hour journey time from Waterford to Dublin City and travels from New Ross to Dublin City in just under three hours. The proposed changes to the route are shown in the following two tables. The service which are about to be suspended are marked in red.

ROUTE 4 NEW ROSS to AIRPORT

DAILY (including Public Holidays)

NEW ROSS	THE QUAY	-	-	X4	-	-	X4	-	-	-	X4	-	-
NEW ROSS	THE QUAY	-	-	0530	-	-	0930	-	-	-	1630	-	-
WATERFORD	BUS STATION	0200	0500	0555	0645	0900	0955	1045	1245	1445	1655	1800	2000
MULLINAVAT	MULHERNS CENTRA				0659	0914		1059	1259	1459		1816	2010
BALLYHALE	OPP DAY TODAY SHOP				0710	0925		1109	1309	1509		1826	2020
THOMASTOWN	BANK OF IRELAND				0718	0933		1118	1318	1518		1835	2030
GOWRAN	OPP POWER'S				0732	0947		1131	1331	1531		1849	2040
ROYAL OAK	SLIP ROAD				0743	0958		1142	1342	1542		1900	2050
LEIGHLINBRIDGE CROSS	SLIP ROAD				0747	1002		1146	1346	1546		1905	2055
CARLOW IT	OPP MAIN ENTRANCE				0759	1014		1156	1356	1556		1916	2105
CARLOW	BARRACK ST	0300	0600	0655	0803	1018	1055	1201	1401	1601	1755	1919	2110
DUBLIN	HEUSTON STATION			0810D	0914D	1129D	1210D	1320D	1520D	1720D	1910D	2029D	2225D
DUBLIN	EDEN QUAY				0923D	1138D		1331D	1531D	1731D		2038D	2228D
DUBLIN	CUSTOM HOUSE QUAY		0725D	0820D	0925D	1140D	1220D	1333D	1533D	1733D	1920D	2040D	2230D
DUBLIN AIRPORT	TERMINAL 2 - DEPARTURES ROAD	0415	0745	0840	0945	1200	1240	1353	1553	1753	1940	2100	-

ROUTE 4 AIRPORT to NEW ROSS

DAILY (including Public Holidays)

DUBLIN AIRPORT	ATRIUM RD ZONE13 STOP 11	0700	0900	X4	1050	1305	X4	1505	1730	1915	X4	2215	-
DUBLIN AIRPORT	ATRIUM RD ZONE13 STOP 11	0700	0900	1000	1050	1305	1400	1505	1730	1915	2100	2215	-
DUBLIN	BUSARAS	0730P	0930P	1030P	1120P	1335P	1430P	1535P	1800P	1945P	2130P	2245P	2345
DUBLIN	OPP HEUSTON STATION	0737P	0937P	1037P	1127P	1342P	1437P	1542P	1805P	1955P	2137P	2250P	2350P
CARLOW	BARRACK ST	0850	1050	1145	1243	1458	1545	1658	1920	2103	2245	0000	0100
CARLOW IT	MAIN ENTRANCE	0852	1052		1246	1501		1701	1925	2104		0005	0105
LEIGHLINBRIDGE CROSS	SLIP RD SERVICE STATION	0902	1102		1257	1512		1712	1935	2115		0015	0115
ROYAL OAK	SLIP ROAD	0906	1106		1301	1516		1716	1939	2119		0019	0119
GOWRAN	POWER'S QUICK PICK	0916	1116		1312	1527		1727	1946	2129		0026	0126
THOMASTOWN	TOWER HOUSE BBB	0928	1128		1325	1540		1740	1955	2142		0035	0135
BALLYHALE	DAY TODAY SHOP	0937	1137		1334	1549		1749	2005	2151		0045	0145
MULLINAVAT	OPP MULHERNS	0947	1147		1344	1559		1759	2015	2201		0055	0155
WATERFORD	BUS STATION	1000	1200	1245	1400	1615	1645	1815	2030	2215	2345	0110	0210
NEW ROSS	SUPERVALU THE QUAY	-	-	1315	-	-	1715	-	-	-	0015	-	-

The consequence of this suspension is the following:

- BÉ Expressway will no longer provide a service the X4 from New Ross to Dublin, via Waterford, with the current frequency of three services per day in each directions being reduced to zero.
- One BÉ Expressway Route 4 service will be suspended from Waterford to Dublin, meaning that the overall number of services from Waterford to Dublin will reduce from twelve to eight.

4. The implications for passengers from Waterford

Introduction

The city of Waterford (population c55,000) has a range of InterCity services to other parts of Ireland. The 2016 census indicates that there are approximately 6,000 people travelling to Dublin from Waterford every week, and approximately 1,000 of them use public transport.

The population is currently serviced by the following services:

- **The 736**, which provides a frequency of up to 98 services each way per week between Waterford, Dublin City and Dublin Airport, and is operated by JJ Kavanagh. This service also serves Carlow on the majority of departures.
- **The 600**, which provides a frequency of up to 63 services each way per week between Waterford and Dublin City, and is operated by Dublin Coach.
- **The 4**, which provides a frequency of 63 services each way per week between Waterford, Dublin City and Dublin Airport, and is operated by BÉ Expressway.
- **The X4**, which provides a frequency of 21 services each way per week between New Ross, Dublin City and Dublin Airport, and is operated by BÉ Expressway.

The combined services offer a weekly total of 224 services each way per week, with a combined seating capacity of approximately 11,000.

In addition, Irish Rail currently operates 48 trains per week between Waterford and Dublin, with a combined seating capacity of approximately 10,000. All services stop in Carlow.

The suspension of the 4 / X4 service will lead to a reduction in the number of weekly services between Waterford and Dublin, from 224 services to 196, a reduction of 12.5%.

The overall seating capacity on the route (including Irish Rail) reduces 21,000 seats to 19,600 seats, a reduction of 7%.

Conclusion in relation to Waterford passengers travelling northwards

It is considered that the reducing in the bus frequency of 12.5% and in overall seating capacity of 7% is unlikely to lead to any significant deterioration in passenger offering for Waterford City residents. Therefore, no extension to the current services is proposed.

5. The implications for passengers from New Ross

Introduction

The town of New Ross (population c8,000) is the starting point of the X4 service. The 2016 census indicates that there are approximately 1,000 people travelling to Dublin from New Ross every week, and approximately 250 of them use public transport.

It is likely that this number has fallen back in recent times, due to the general economic climate coupled with the move towards remote working.

The population is currently serviced by the following services:

- **The X4**, which provides a direct service with a frequency of 21 services each way per week between New Ross and Dublin City and Dublin Airport, and is operated by BÉ Expressway.

In addition, it is possible to travel on other routes between New Ross and other locations and interchange onto services to Dublin from there. The main two interchange points (examined here) are Waterford and Wexford. The following services provide connections to both Waterford and Wexford, where onward transfers can be made:

- **40**, which provides a frequency of 41 services each way per week between Wexford and Rosslare, and is operated by BÉ Expressway.
- **370**, which provides a frequency of up to 30 services a week from Waterford to New Ross, with 6 going on the Wexford. This PSO service is operated by Bus Éireann and would continue to operate.
- **340**, which provides a frequency of 52 services each way per week between Wexford and Waterford, and is operated by Wexford Bus.
- **372**, which provides a frequency of 6 services a week from Waterford to Wexford. This PSO service is operated by Bus Éireann.

Waterford to New Ross

There are currently 150 weekly services between Waterford and New Ross. This will reduce to 129 weekly services after the suspension of the X4. The combined weekly seating capacity will reduce from approximately 7,500 to approximately 6,500.

New Ross to Wexford

There are currently 41 services a week on the 40, 6 services a week on the 370, 52 services a week on the 340 and 6 services a week on the 372, totalling 105 weekly services. This will be unchanged by the suspension of the X4, with a combined capacity of approximately 5,000 seats.

Travel opportunities from Wexford to Dublin

A number of bus services operate on this route:

- **The 2 / X2**, which provides a frequency of 105 services each way per day between Wexford and Dublin City and Dublin Airport, or 102 services a week, and is operated by BÉ Expressway.

- **The 740**, which provides a frequency of 133 services each way per day between Wexford and Dublin City and Dublin Airport, or 126 services a week, and is operated by Wexford Bus.

The combined services offer a weekly total of 238 services each way per week, with a combined seating capacity of approximately 12,000.

In addition, Irish Rail currently runs 31 trains per week between Wexford and Dublin, with a combined weekly seating capacity of approximately 6,000. The overall seating capacity on the route (including Irish Rail) is therefore approximately 18,000.

New Ross to Carlow

Currently there are 21 services each way per week between New Ross and Carlow on the X4. After the suspension of these services there will be no direct service between these two towns.

However, the direct connection will be restored in the New Year, as the Connecting Ireland Project will see the introduction of Route 887 in Q1 2023. This will provide 21 services each week from Carlow to New Ross. Passengers from New Ross will be able to change from Route 887 onto the Irish Rail network at Carlow.

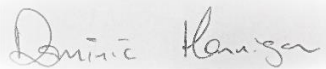
Conclusion in relation to Passengers from New Ross

There is currently a small number of passengers (250 a week) who are travelling by public transport from New Ross to Dublin. Most of these will be availing of the direct X4 services. However, there will be a significant minority of these availing of other services by interchanging at Waterford, Wexford or elsewhere, because the existing New Ross departures at 05:30, 09:30 and 16:30 do not suit their schedule. In addition, the availability of the 20% fare reduction on PSO services may mean that travel via PSO with the interchange is cheaper than the cost of the BÉ Expressway service.

6. Determination

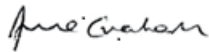
The Authority has determined that there is a sufficient range of existing services in the Wexford and Waterford region and a number of services planned for delivery in Q1 2023 to adequately meet the demand of passengers from New Ross who are currently travelling on the 4 / X4 service.

As a result, it is not proposed to provide any additional PSO services following the suspension of the BE Expressway service.



Dominic Hannigan
Head of Public Transport Regulation

Approved:



Anne Graham
Chief Executive Officer

Dated: 21st October 2022