BUS CONNECTS DUBLIN

Progress Report December 2025

NTA
Údarás Náisiúnta Iompair
National Transport Authority

BUS CONNECTS

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland 2040

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Purpose of the BusConnects Programme Progress Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the BusConnects Dublin Programme. It has been prepared in response to recommendations provided to the National Transport Authority (NTA) in July 2023 by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and is published to the BusConnects website on a twice-yearly basis. The key recommendations of the PAC were:

- that the NTA publishes a twice-yearly update on the BusConnects Programme on the dedicated BusConnects website. As part of these updates, customer satisfaction surveys should be undertaken, and the results published, and;
- that the NTA provides detailed metrics that demonstrate the success of initiatives implemented under the BusConnects Programme, and specifically for the Network Redesign Project (NRD).

This progress report will include status updates on the projects that make up the BusConnects Dublin Programme and the progress towards achievement of the Programme's outcomes. The key metrics included will apply to projects and initiatives that have been implemented more than six months prior to the report to allow for appropriate time to collect and analyse the relevant data while also acknowledging that results of these implementations may require several months or more to materialise.

Specific to the Dublin Network Redesign Project that is part of the BusConnects Dublin Programme, the NTA will report on the following metrics, among others, as a means of measuring the success of newly implemented phases: annualised cost changes; annualised passenger number changes; punctuality; reliability; and an annual customer satisfaction survey. To account for the impacts of COVID-19, 2019 was chosen as the baseline year for comparison.

This document also includes general information about the BusConnects Programme, including the vision and strategic objectives of the five BusConnects Programmes, information on the component projects of the BusConnects Dublin Programme, and an update on the current status of each project. As other BusConnects Programmes in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford move into implementation, the report will expand to include relevant progress updates for each.

BusConnects Dublin Programme Progress DECEMBER 2025

BusConnects is a strategic programme aimed at enhancing sustainable transportation across five cities in Ireland - Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, and Waterford. The BusConnects Programme represents a transformation of bus services to deliver outcomes greater than what can be achieved through individual network interventions.

Vision

To connect people and places through an enhanced bus system together with improved cycling and pedestrian facilities

Strategic Objective	Programme Outcomes
Strategic Objective A To provide reliable and frequent bus services with improved cycling and pedestrian facilities	Make bus and active travel a more reliable transport option Improve bus journey times, frequency and punctuality Enhance the people carrying capacity and cater for future demand
Strategic Objective B To connect people and places through an expanded, integrated and accessible sustainable transport system	Increase destinations served by the bus and active travel networks Simplify interchange between bus services and other transport modes Improve inclusivity and accessibility of the bus and active travel networks
Strategic Objective C To enhance quality of life through a safer and greener transport system	Enhance the safety and security and provide safer cycling and pedestrian networks Deliver enhanced bus and active travel options that reduce climate impact Improve air quality along key BusConnects corridors Improve health and wellbeing of bus and active travel users

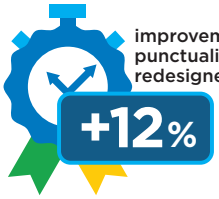
BusConnects Dublin Initiative	Progress as of End of November 2025
Network Redesign	Implemented 7 out of 11 phases of the redesigned network
Core Bus Corridors	Construction phase of the Liffey Valley to City Centre scheme initiated
New Generation Ticketing	Project now moving into the build stage
Fares	90-minute fare used almost 26 million times by bus passengers (up to end of September 2025)
Livery	New bus livery (branding, colours) introduced on most Dublin buses
Stops and Shelters	567 Real-Time Passenger Information (RTPI) units installed along the redesigned network
Transition to Zero	124 fully operational electric buses launched in Dublin city, with chargers installed

Progress at a Glance

increase in passenger boarding on the redesigned bus network vs 6% increase on non-BusConnects routes

kilometres per year with the redesigned bus network, a 62% increase on previous service provided

improvement in reliability of bus services on the redesigned network



improvement in punctuality rate in the redesigned bus network vs 9.6% increase on non-BusConnects routes

uses of the 90-minute fare on buses (by end of September 2025)

and additional weekend service in the redesigned network

emissions avoided since 2024 thanks to the electric bus fleet

BusConnects Programme

BusConnects is the National Transport Authority's (NTA) Programme to transform bus services in Irish cities by connecting people and places through an enhanced bus system and improved cycling and pedestrian facilities. It is a key part of national policy and aligns with government's goal to improve public transport to support population and economic growth as well as address climate change.

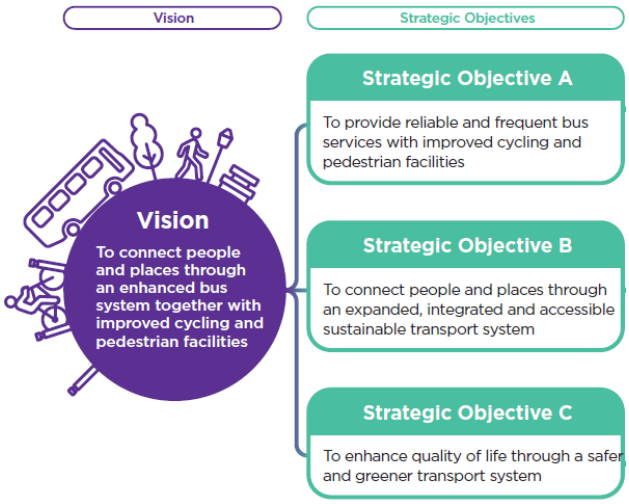


Figure 1: BusConnects Programme Vision and Strategic Objectives

The broad geographical coverage, including the cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, and Waterford, and the comprehensive approach of the BusConnects Programme, underscore its potential nationwide impact and demonstrate the concerted efforts of these regions in advancing sustainable urban mobility agendas.

The scale and transformative potential of the BusConnects Programme reinforces its central role in influencing the future roadmap of Ireland's transport system. It delivers on commitments within the National Development Plan 2021-2030, the Climate Action Plan 2025, the National Planning Framework 2040, the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042 and other metropolitan area transport strategies.

The BusConnects Programme is intended to fundamentally transform cities' bus systems so that journeys by bus will be fast, reliable, punctual, convenient and accessible. It will also transform cycling infrastructure by improving cycle facilities on key corridors, including providing segregated cycling routes and reducing the need to share limited road space with bus. These improvements are being achieved through the different initiatives listed below:

Figure 2: BusConnects Programme Initiatives

BusConnects Dublin Programme

The BusConnects Dublin Programme is the most advanced of the BusConnects Programmes across Ireland. Many of the benefits of BusConnects Dublin identified in the Preliminary business case (PBC) require implementation of all component projects before benefits can be fully realised. For example, the implementation of the 12 Core Bus Corridors' (CBC) schemes will greatly improve the reliability and punctuality of the bus services along these corridors as they remove buses from traffic through the provision of bus lanes or other priority arrangements. Realisation of the BusConnects Dublin Programme benefits will be tracked as each initiative is implemented to ensure confidence that all benefits can and will be realised upon programme completion.

The subsequent sections of this report provide an overview and progress update for each project in the BusConnects Dublin Programme.

a. Core Bus Corridors

The Core Bus Corridors' (CBC) Project involves the development of continuous bus priority infrastructure and improved pedestrian and cycling facilities on key radial corridors across the Dublin region. Its objectives are:

- Enhance the capacity and potential of the public transport system by improving bus speeds, reliability, and punctuality through the provision of bus lanes and other measures to provide priority to bus movements over general traffic movements.
- Enhance the potential for cycling by providing safe infrastructure for cycling, segregated from general traffic wherever practicable.
- Support the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service, which supports the achievement of Ireland's emissions reduction targets.
- Enable compact growth, regeneration opportunities and more effective use of land in Dublin, for present and future generations, through the provision of safe and efficient sustainable transport networks.
- Improve accessibility to jobs, education and other social and economic opportunities through the provision of improved sustainable connectivity and integration with other public transport services.
- Ensure that the public realm is carefully considered in the design and development of transport infrastructure and seek to enhance key urban focal points where appropriate and feasible.

The CBC project encompasses the delivery of approximately 230 kilometres of dedicated bus lanes and 200 kilometres of cycle tracks in 12 separate schemes across five local authority areas, as shown in **Figure 3** below:

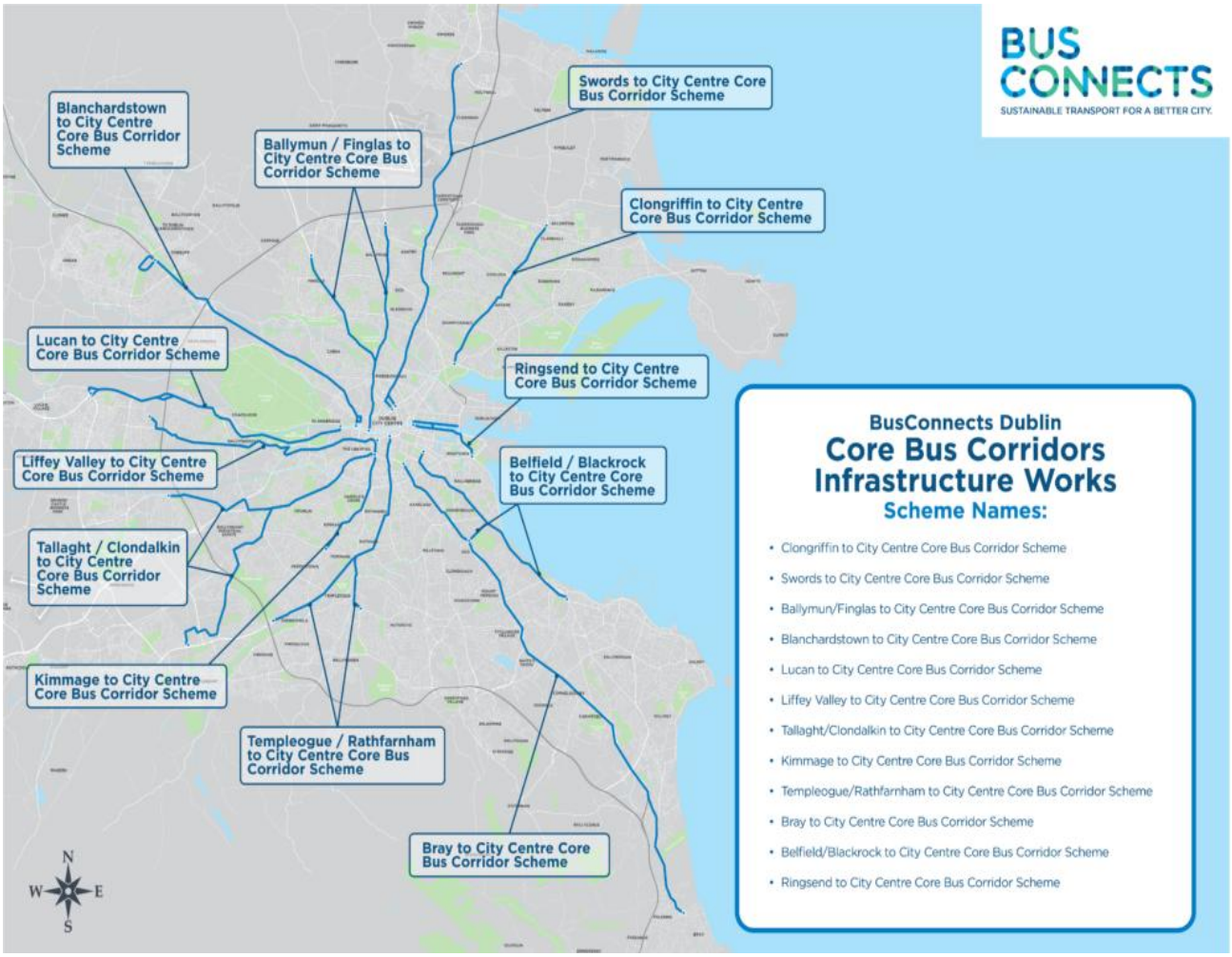


Figure 3: 12 Core Bus Corridors Schemes in the BusConnects Dublin Programme

The NTA and its BusConnects Core Bus Corridors' team undertook a lengthy period of non-statutory public consultation to engage stakeholders across Dublin. There has been a total of three rounds of non-statutory public consultations conducted through a dedicated website, public information events, community events, a range of digital channels, traditional published material, press and radio advertising, outdoor advertising, presentations, infographics and virtual formats. This comprehensive consultation undertaking laid the groundwork for progressing each scheme through the planning process.

With the approval of the Kimmage to City Centre scheme on 28 May 2025, all 12 CBC schemes under BusConnects Dublin have now received planning consent from An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP), formerly An Bord Pleanála (ABP), including the associated compulsory purchase orders. This represents a significant milestone in the BusConnects Programme delivery of the 12 CBC schemes. *(It is noted that some schemes are subject to judicial review).*

Figure 4: BusConnects Schemes - Approved Milestones

To support the efficient rollout of CBC schemes, the NTA has established a new framework agreement for construction contractors. This framework is designed to streamline procurement, enable faster mobilisation and ensure greater consistency in delivery. It also facilitates the transfer of knowledge and best practices across the BusConnects Dublin Programme, enhancing overall project outcomes. The framework is made up of six highly experienced construction companies:

- John Graham Construction Limited
- John Sisk & Son
- Farrans Construction
- Will Bros Limited
- GMC Group Limited
- Jons Civil Engineering and Clonmel Enterprises Limited (Joint Venture)

The focus of activity has now moved to the construction stage for Liffey Valley to City Centre Scheme. In addition to the Liffey Valley to City Centre Scheme, the two CBC schemes below progressed to new stages:

- The construction contract for the Ballymun/Finglas to City Centre Scheme was awarded in December 2025, with construction on site anticipated to commence in 2026.
- Construction of the Clongriffin to City Centre Scheme, is expected to be brought to procurement during 2026, reflecting continued momentum in the development of Dublin's transport network.

The construction of the corridors will be delivered on a phased basis in order to reduce the traffic impacts that could arise. Given the traffic management requirements during construction, it is considered that a maximum of four corridors can be built concurrently.

Liffey Valley to City Centre

The Liffey Valley to City Centre Scheme marked a major milestone as the first of 12 Core Bus Corridors' (CBC) project to enter construction in the Greater Dublin Area. This represents a significant investment in delivering sustainable transport in the capital.

GMC Group Ltd was awarded the contract for the scheme. The contract signing took place on 31 July 2025 with the Minister of Transport, Darragh O'Brien, interim CEO of the NTA, Hugh Creegan, and Shane McCloskey, Director of GMC Utilities Group, which helped to raise stakeholder awareness of the BusConnects Programme.

Figure 5: Liffey Valley CBC Contract Signing

The scheme extends approximately 9.2 kilometres, from Liffey Valley to the City Centre. It will include 18.4 kilometres of dedicated bus priority lanes in both directions, ensuring fasters and more efficient bus services, together with 13.3 kilometres of cycle lanes, supporting active travel and improving safety for cyclists throughout the route.

The scheme will support multimodal connectivity by linking Fonthill Road to the newly developed bus interchange at Liffey Valley Shopping Centre, and by providing a new pedestrian link from St Patricks University Hospital to Heuston Station and introducing a new pedestrian connection and interchange with the Luas red line at St James's Hospital. This will facilitate seamless integration between bus, rail, and Luas services.

The scheme will therefore play a key role in enhancing sustainable transport access between suburban areas and the city centre.

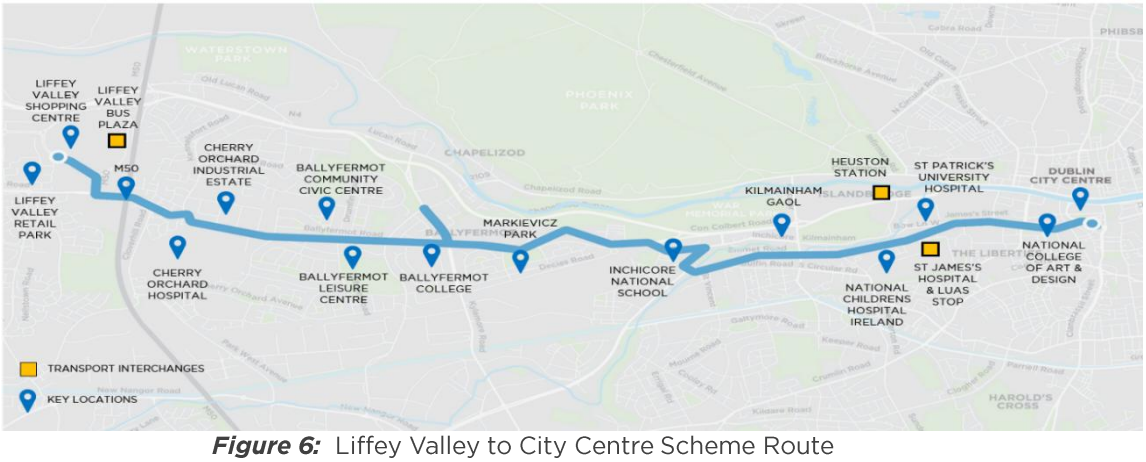


Figure 6: Liffey Valley to City Centre Scheme Route

The construction phase of the Liffey Valley to City Centre scheme is scheduled to begin in December 2025 starting at Liffey Valley Shopping Centre, the works will continue for around three years, with completion anticipated in early 2028.

The construction timeline has been developed in collaboration with the contractor, GMC Group, and reflects a careful, phased approach designed to minimise disruptions along the corridor. Construction will progress in stages, moving up and down the corridor to help reduce the impact on local communities and businesses.

The scope of works will include:

- Road infrastructure upgrades (including road widening)
- Installation of essential utilities
- Drainage systems improvements
- Public lighting enhancements
- Urban realm improvements (such as landscaping and pedestrian-friendly features)

Stakeholder Communication

Detailed communication arrangements for the construction phase strategy have been agreed and implemented to keep businesses, community groups and public representatives informed. These arrangements ensure access to liaison personnel and deliver clear updates on works and progress throughout the BusConnects Programme.

Community engagement remains central to the programme, with two- way communication through multiple channels to share information and address queries. Dedicated phone lines (including out-of-hours), email and scheme-specific websites are available for updates and questions. In additional, local area engagement groups comprising of residents, business and public representative meet regularly with NTA to discuss upcoming work and local issues.

These arrangements build on a series of community engagement activities that took place in the summer 2025 as part of the BusConnects Programme. Notable events include several key events and communications with local stakeholders. BusConnects posters for the Liffey Valley to City Centre Scheme were displayed at the Ballyfermot Festival (19-27 July 2025), followed by a Public Representative Meeting on Tuesday, 19 August 2025 at the Ballyfermot Civil Centre. Public Information Events were held between the 20-27 August 2025 at two locations along the Liffey Valley to City Centre Scheme, featuring route visualisations, general arrangement drawings a programme of work map and bilingual brochures as can be viewed in **Figure 7.**

Figure 7: Liffey Valley Public Event Communications

To support wider awareness of the events, a press advertisement ran on the Thursday, 14 August 2025 in The Echo and Liffey Champion highlighting all key communication and social media channels. Additionally, a leaflet drop was carried out on Thursday, 7 August 2025 reaching approximately 150,000 households along the scheme corridor.

The BusConnects summer social media campaigns have shown strong performance, consistently exceeding expectations. In July 2025, the campaign reached 692,000 users, reflecting high engagement and surpassing targets by 21%. The campaign supporting the Liffey Valley Public Information Events performed even better, reaching over 1 million users.

The BusConnects CBC project demonstrates extensive stakeholder engagement, combining digital outreach, printed communication, and direct interaction. High submission numbers and website visits not just for the Liffey Valley scheme but the BusConnects Programme indicate the strong public interest, while thousands of letters and calls reflect proactive communication. The overall scale of printed materials and meetings show a significant investment in transparency and public engagement as can be viewed in **Figure 8**.

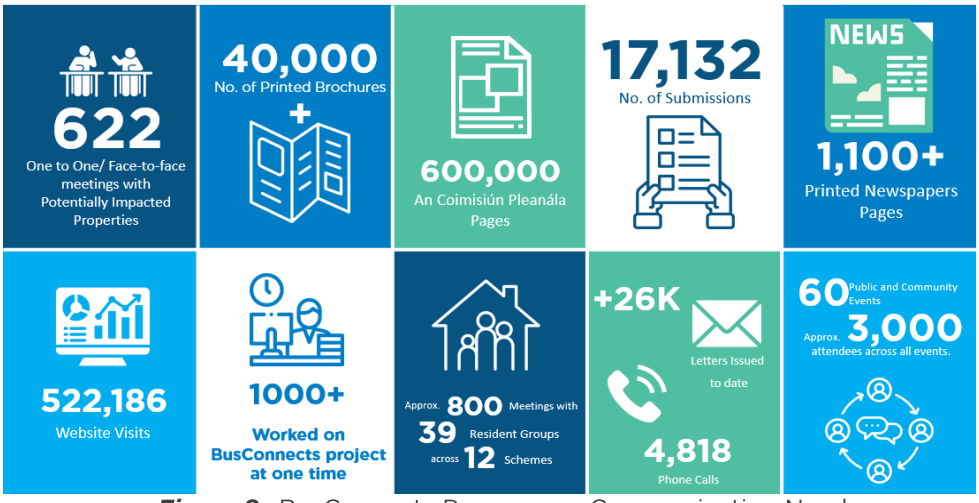


Figure 8: BusConnects Programme Communication Number

As the Liffey Valley to City Centre Scheme enters its construction phase, these communication arrangements continue to operate to ensure consistent engagement and information provision. Dedicated liaison personnel are available to support stakeholders and respond to queries. For updates and enquiries, the following contact channels are available for the Liffey Valley Scheme:

- Phone: 1800 303 700 (available 24/7, including out of hours and weekends)
- Email: Liffeyvalleyscheme@busconnects.ie
- Website: www.liffeyvalleyscheme.ie

All planned activities will be communicated in detail to impacted residents and stakeholders with updates available at: https://liffeyvalleyscheme.ie/construction-timeline/.

b. Next Generation Ticketing

The Next Generation Ticketing (NGT) project is progressing steadily as part of the BusConnects Programme initiative to modernise public transport. Existing ticketing systems on rail and bus are approaching the end of their operational life and are being replaced with a more efficient system. The new system will incorporate the latest developments in account-based ticketing, enabling convenient payment options such as contactless and mobile devices as convenient means of payment.

Indra S.A., a company with international experience in similar projects, is delivering the large-scale ticketing system. The project is currently moving into the build phase. A comprehensive set of technical designs has been developed to guide implementation, ensuring system requirements are clearly defined to support the build and testing stages.

A test version of the new ticket machine is being developed for installation, which will support future hardware deployment. Training materials are being finalised to ensure teams are well-prepared for the next stages of implementation.

In November 2025, NTA published a range of public-facing materials in relation to NGT including a status report in Gaeilge and English.

c. Simpler Fare Structure

Effective from 28 April 2025, Transport for Ireland (TFI) introduced a new TFI fare zone structure for the Greater Dublin Area and surrounding areas. This update established four distance-based fare zones across all TFI public transport services including Bus, DART/Commuter Rail services and Luas.

- TFI Zone 1: TFI Dublin (Dublin city zone): Covering the Dublin Central Urban Area (see **Figure 9.1**).
- TFI Zones 2-4: Dublin commuter zones: Extending outward from Dublin City Centre to suburban and regional areas across the commuter belt (see **Figure 9.2**).

Figure 9.1: TFI Zone 1: TFI Dublin (Dublin city zone)

Figure 9.2: TFI Zones 2, 3 and 4: Dublin Commuter Zones

The TFI 90 Minute Fare (TFI 90) continues to support integrated travel within Zone 1, enabling seamless connections between Dublin Bus, DART/Commuter Rail and Luas services. Passengers can switch between any combination of Dublin Bus, DART/Commuter Rail and Luas services at no extra cost subject to commencing the last leg within 90 minutes of first boarding. The ability to continue your journey in Zone 1 for free within 90 minutes of first Leap tap on is also available to rail passengers travelling from Zones 2,3 or 4. Various one day, weekly and monthly multi-modal tickets are also available.

Although the revised fare structure was introduced in April 2025, the TFI 90 fare had already been in place beforehand. The impact of the project is being continually assessed to determine if the anticipated benefits have been realised, including increase in TFI Leap Card usage and public transport passengers.

From January to September 2025, 25.5 million journeys were taken using the TFI 90 fare by bus passengers transferring from DART, Luas or another bus service within a 90-minute window. This sustained level of usage highlights the ongoing demand for integrated and flexible travel options across the public transport network, demonstrating the continued popularity of the TFI 90 fare and its effectiveness in facilitating multi-modal travel.

d. Transition to Zero

BusConnects Dublin includes the transition to a zero-emission bus fleet to create a cleaner and more liveable city, contributing to the national priority to tackle climate change. The Transition to Zero Project also includes the electrification of existing bus depots and the construction of new depots to support operation of the fully electric fleet. To date, the project has introduced 124 electric buses into service, with charging capacity in place in

Summerhill and Phibsborough depots. In total, the electric bus fleet covered **4.8 million kilometres since 2024.** This has led to **approximately 4,500 tonnes of avoided C02 emissions up to the end of September 2025**, when compared to the emissions of diesel buses travelling the same distance. The emissions avoided are comparable to the annual output of approximately 1,673 cars, or 134 double-decker buses.

Reducing CO2 emissions will play a significant role in advancing the decarbonisation efforts of public transport, aligning with the goals of the Climate Action Plan. The NTA intends that 85% of the Dublin Metropolitan Area urban bus network will be operated by low and zero emission buses by 2032, and solely by zero emission buses by 2035.

Ballycoolin Depot (Fingal)

To support the transition to zero, a planning application was submitted on 21 July 2025 for the development of a new electric bus depot in Ballycoolin, Dublin. The proposed site is located on unoccupied land immediately south of Ballycoolin Road, selected for its proximity to the Northwest Fingal / Blanchardstown area, where existing depot coverage is limited.

The depot will provide 176 parking bays for electric buses and will include essential infrastructure for maintenance, charging, inspection and administration operations. A dedicated substation and associated electrical equipment are also planned to support depot functionality.

Once operational, the depot is expected to create in the region of approximately 500 roles across driving, maintenance, engineering, operations and administration. This development is expected to play a key role in boosting local employment and skills development, creating long-term opportunities and economic growth.

Jamestown Depot (Finglas)

A new bus depot has commenced operations on Jamestown Road as part of Phase 7 of the public transport enhancement programme. Developed collaboratively by Dublin Bus and the NTA the facility is designed to support the rollout of electric buses and future service growth. It currently accommodates 86 buses and 93 drivers, servicing 35 routes daily. The site includes 178 parking bays, providing capacity for both existing and expanded operations.

This development contributes to the broader strategy of building a more integrated, low-emission transport system for Dublin. It supports national objectives around sustainable travel, improved urban mobility, and climate action.

e. Stops and Shelters

The BusConnects Dublin Programme includes construction of enhanced bus stops and shelters across Dublin to align with the redesigned network and construction of the Core Bus Corridors. The new style of TFI bus stops and shelters are shown below in **Figure 10**.

Figure 10: New TFI Bus Stops and New Bus Shelter

To optimise space and reduce street clutter, all future Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) installations will be integrated within bus shelters, ensuring a more streamlined and user-friendly streetscape while enhancing the customer experience. RTPI rollout continues across the redesigned BusConnects Dublin network, with 567 display locations now equipped with the service. The latest RTPI unit features standard 6-line displays enhanced with audio functionality, improving accessibility for all users.

The launch of the F-Spine (Phase 7 of the network redesign) on 19 October 2025 involved 300 newly installed and upgraded bus stop facilities across Dublin to support the newly introduced services. This marks a significant milestone in the ongoing development of the BusConnects Programme. Construction is actively progressing to deliver the infrastructure required for future Phases.

f. Livery

As part of BusConnects, the exterior and interior of buses, known as the bus livery, has been standardised across different operators in to give the bus system a modern and consistent look to improve the passenger experience. As part of BusConnects, a new TFI livery has been introduced consisting of green, yellow and black paintwork overlaid with white vinyl, providing a standardised, singular design unifying the overall fleet.

Figure 11: New Bus Livery

This new design, mirroring the same colour palette of the new bus stops, is intended to reinforce the integrated nature of the fleet, allowing passengers to more easily identify these services alongside other commercial operations. Careful consideration was given to accessibility needs as part of the new livery design, with a full yellow front on the buses and yellow banding on the entrance door, both designed to assist people with visual impairments.

While newly purchased fleet is painted in the new livery at the manufacturing stage, the rollout of the new livery for the existing fleet is taking a number of years, with the changeover on each vehicle occurring at its next scheduled re-painting date with bus re-painting occurring approximately every four years. In this way, no additional repainting costs are being incurred as part of the livery transition.

g. Network Redesign

Following three rounds of public consultation that began in 2017, the NTA finalised and published the new Dublin area bus network in September 2020. The overall objective of the new network is to provide a network that better meets the needs of the overall region and takes account of the growing population and changing travel patterns.

This new bus network plan considered issues raised by over 72,000 submissions at the various stages of public consultation. The implementation of the new network, known as the Dublin Network Redesign Project, is being delivered in Phases over a number of years, starting in 2021.

Key characteristics of the proposals include a simpler network centred on eight main spines labelled A to H, more frequent services, particularly at off-peak times and at weekends, plus better coverage of the city including more orbital connections.

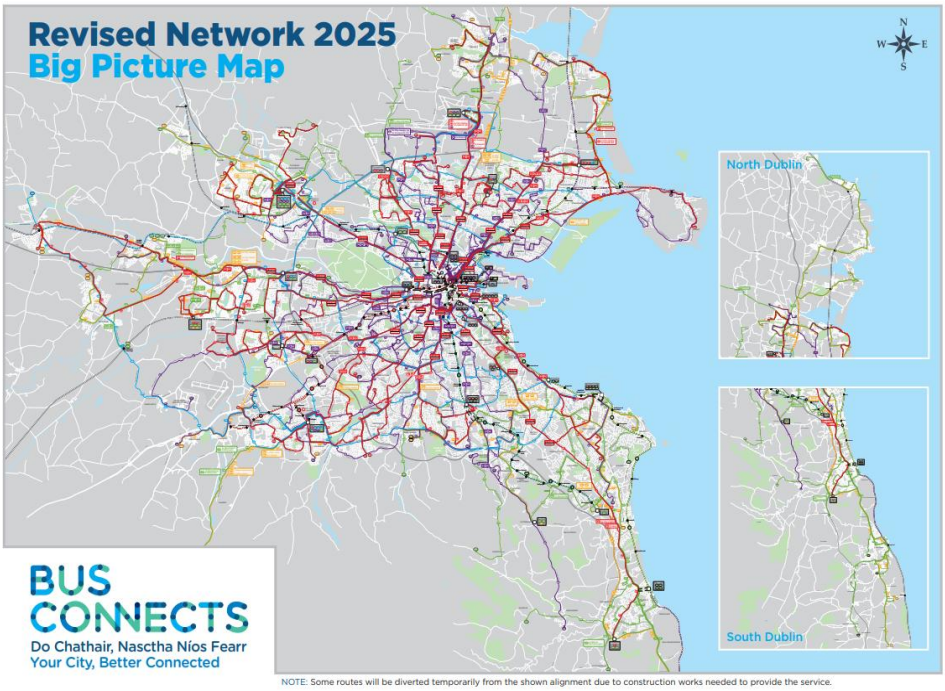


Figure 12: Dublin Revised Network

The redesigned network represents a major investment in enhanced bus services. This expansion will significantly increase overall capacity and frequency for customers, as well as more evening and weekend services. Additionally, **12 new 24-hour routes have been launched so far as part of Network Redesign up to and including Phase 7.** The Phases implemented to date are described below;

Phase 1 (incorporating H-Spine routes)

The NTA launched Phase 1 of the new network for Dublin in June 2021. Phase 1 included routes connecting Dublin's northeast to the city centre covering the areas of Howth, Baldoyle, Donaghmede, Raheny, Malahide and Portmarnock.

The H-Spine branches deliver fast and frequent services to the city centre. Services on H1 (from Baldoyle), H2 (from Malahide) and H3 (from Howth) provide greater levels of service to these residents and the surrounding communities.

This Phase provides an annual increase of 594,028 kilometres, or 43% in scheduled service kilometres, compared to equivalent routes operating prior to the launch of Phase 1.

Phase 2 (incorporating C-Spine routes)

Phase 2 of Network Redesign launched on 28 November 2021 serving the communities of Maynooth, Celbridge, Leixlip, Lucan, Adamstown, Liffey Valley and Palmerstown to the City Centre as well as Ringsend and Sandymount.

This saw the introduction of the C-Spine (C1, C2, C3, C4), Route 52, eight peak only routes (P29, X25, X26, X27, X28, X30, X31 and X32) and six local routes (L51, L52, L53, L54, L58 and L59). Two night-time routes (C5 and C6) were also introduced. This Phase is primarily operated by Dublin Bus, with the exception of the L51 and L52 which are operated by Go-Ahead Ireland.

This Phase provides an annual increase of 1,871,446 kilometres or 36% in scheduled service kilometres, compared to equivalent routes operating prior to the launch of Phase 2.

Phase 3 (incorporating northern suburban N orbital routes)

Phase 3 of Network Redesign launched on 29 May 2022 in the north of Dublin. This Phase introduced northern orbital routes N4 (City Docklands-Finglas-Blanchardstown) and N6 (Kilbarrack-Finglas), with Route N4 operating on a 24-hour basis each day. The introduction of these new routes coincided with the removal of the previously existing 17a and 31d.

This Phase provides an annual increase of 1,636,142 kilometres or 171% in scheduled service kilometres, compared to equivalent routes operating prior to the launch of Phase 3.

Phase 4 (incorporating G-Spine routes)

Phase 4 launched on 16 October 2022 serving the areas of Red Cow, Ballyfermot, City Centre, Spencer Dock, Liffey Valley Shopping Centre, Clondalkin, Cherry Orchard, Decies Road, Islandbridge and Sir John Rogerson's Quay.

This Phase saw the introduction of the G-Spine routes G1, G2 and Route 60, all operated by Dublin Bus, with G1 and G2 Spines operating on a 24-hour basis. Routes 79, 79a and the Western part of Route 40 were discontinued as part of this Phase.

Phase 4 provides an annual increase of 805,309 kilometres or 28% in scheduled service kilometres, compared to equivalent routes operating prior to the launch of Phase 4.

Phase 5a (incorporating outer western suburban W orbital routes)

Phase 5a launched on 25 June 2023, comprising the W Orbital routes in the west and south-west regions of Dublin, serving the areas of Newcastle, Saggart, Citywest, Tallaght, Liffey Valley, Lucan, Blanchardstown, Hazelhatch, Maynooth, and Celbridge.

This Phase saw the introduction of new W Orbital routes W4, W61 and W62, all operated by Go-Ahead Ireland. These three new routes run on average every 15-30 minutes on weekdays and every 30-60 minutes on Saturday and Sunday.

Phase 5a provides an annual increase of 1,253,841 kilometres in scheduled service kilometres. There were no equivalent routes operating prior to the launch of this Phase.

Phase 5b (incorporating western and southern suburban W and S orbital routes)

Phase 5b of Network Redesign commenced on the 26 November 2023 and involved the introduction of new Southern orbital, radial and local routes. Routes S2, 74 and L25 are operated by Dublin Bus and Routes S4, S6, S8, W2 and L55 are operated by Go-Ahead Ireland. Legacy orbital routes 17, 18, 75/a, 76/a, and 175 were removed.

There was an annual increase of 2,988,958 kilometres or 112% in scheduled service kilometres, compared to equivalent routes operating prior to the launch of Phase 5b.

Phase 6a (incorporating E-Spine and associated routes)

Orbital route N2 commenced service at the end of September 2024, serving areas including Blackhorse Avenue, Nephin Road, Broombridge, Ballyboggan Road, Old Finglas Road, Griffith Avenue, Marino and more. It offers brand new connections and interchange opportunities with other TFI bus, rail and tram services.

The rest of Phase 6a launched on the 26 January 2025, with 24-hour spine routes E1 and E2 serving areas including Bray, city centre, Ballymun and Santry, and a new radial route 19 serving the Airport, Ballymun, Drumcondra and the city centre. Phase 6a also includes the introduction of local routes L1, L2, L3, L12, L14, L15, L26, L27 and express routes X1 and X2. Legacy routes replaced by Phase 6a were: 46a, 46e, 63, 63a, 84, 84a, 84x, 143, 144, 145, 155, 184 and 185.

On 15 June 2025, the NTA and Dublin Bus extended bus route L14 to Cherrywood via Shankill as part of the Phase 6a. The extended route now serves Southern Cross, Bray, Palermo, Shankill, Loughlinstown, Laughanstown, and Cherrywood, with a direct interchange to the Luas Green Line at Cherrywood.

There was an annual increase of 2,863,190 kilometres or 46% in scheduled service kilometres, compared to equivalent routes operating prior to the launch of Phase 6a.

Phase 7 (incorporating F-Spine and associated routes)

Phase 7 of the Network Redesign commenced on 19 October 2025 introducing three new 24-hour routes, F1, F2 and Route 80 serving the communities of Charlestown, Ballymun, Finglas, Glasnevin, Broombridge, Kimmage, Templeogue, Rathmines, Palmerston and Tallaght. Phase 7 also introduces route F3 servicing areas including Templeogue, Perrystown, Greenhills and Walkinstown. Additionally, new radial routes 23, 24, 73 and 82 were launched along with local route L89. The phase is primarily operated by Dublin Bus, except for Route 73 which is operated by Go-Ahead Ireland. Legacy routes 9, 26, 40, 40b, 49, 54a, 83/a, 123 and 140 were discontinued.

As part of Phase 7, Route 122 was diverted via Galtymore Road in Drimnagh to enhance local access, while Route 150 was be realigned to serve Greenhills College, travelling via Limekiln Road and Limekiln Avenue.

On 28 November 2025, the NTA announced an amendment to bus Route 80 in response to operational delays being experienced on Bridge Street and High Street, both of which have limited bus priority, and customer feedback. The route, which runs from Chapelizod to the city centre, will be extended along the North Quays to O'Connell Bridge and Custom House Quay before continuing north to Clontarf. Route 80 will merge with Route 130 to create a new through city centre service, scheduled to commence in Q2 of 2026, offering improved interchange connectivity with the Luas Green Line at O'Connell Street and the DART network at Connolly station.

In advance of this, from early 2026 and as a temporary measure Route 80 will be amended to operate from Liffey Valley to Chapelizod on a revised alignment along the quays to the south city, crossing the Liffey at O'Connell Bridge, rather than at Bridge Street, and running through College Green to South Great George's Street. This temporary change will come into effect in the new year.

Additionally, the southern alignments of Routes 23 and 24, which serve the Finglas area, are also being amended due to the same reliability issues being experienced in Bridge Street and High Street. This will see Routes 23 and Routes 24 operating along the Quays to/from Church Street, crossing the Liffey at O'Connell Bridge or Rosie Hackett Bridge, and continuing around Trinity to its current terminus in Merrion Square. This interim measure is expected to improved reliability and maintain connectivity with the O'Connell Bridge area.

Phase 7 introduced the largest geographical expansion within the BusConnects Dublin Programme with the rollout increasing overall network coverage by 14%. As this Phase was launched within the last three months, data is not yet available for analysis and will follow in the next progress report.

h. Programme Key Performance Indicators Update

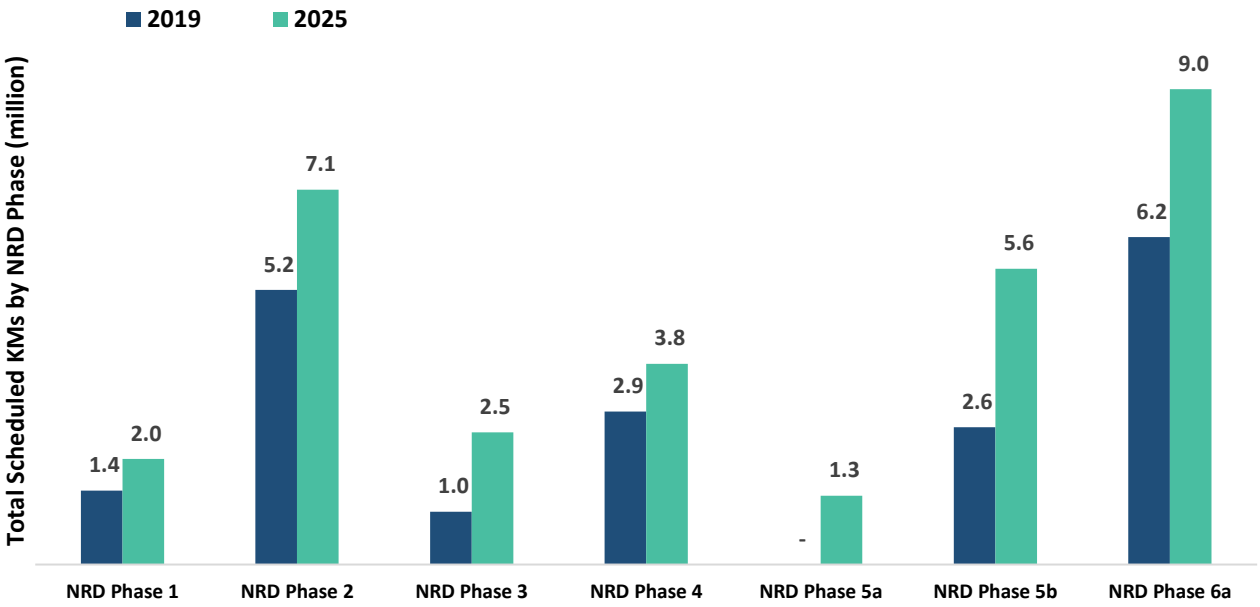
Key performance indicators (KPIs) are being used to measure the progress and realisation of the BusConnects Dublin Programme benefits. The metrics below show the progress of the Programme, highlighting the impact of the partial implementation of the Dublin Network Redesign (NRD) Project.

Comparisons were made for NRD Phases 1-6a before launch (from Q3 2019) and after launch (from Q3 2025). These same time periods were used to calculate changes to the KPIs across the full bus network and routes not included in these Phases. Phases 1-6a have been assessed for changes in passenger boardings, punctuality, regularity, reliability and access to opportunities, with all NRD Phases showing an overall improvement across metrics.

Scheduled Kilometres Operated

Overall, there has been **an annualised increase of 12,013,000 scheduled kilometres**, or 62% scheduled service kilometres in Phases 1-6a, compared to equivalent routes operating prior to Network Redesign. NRD Phase 5a has no legacy routes to act as 2019 baseline.

Figure 13: Annual Kilometres Covered by Implemented Network Redesign Phases

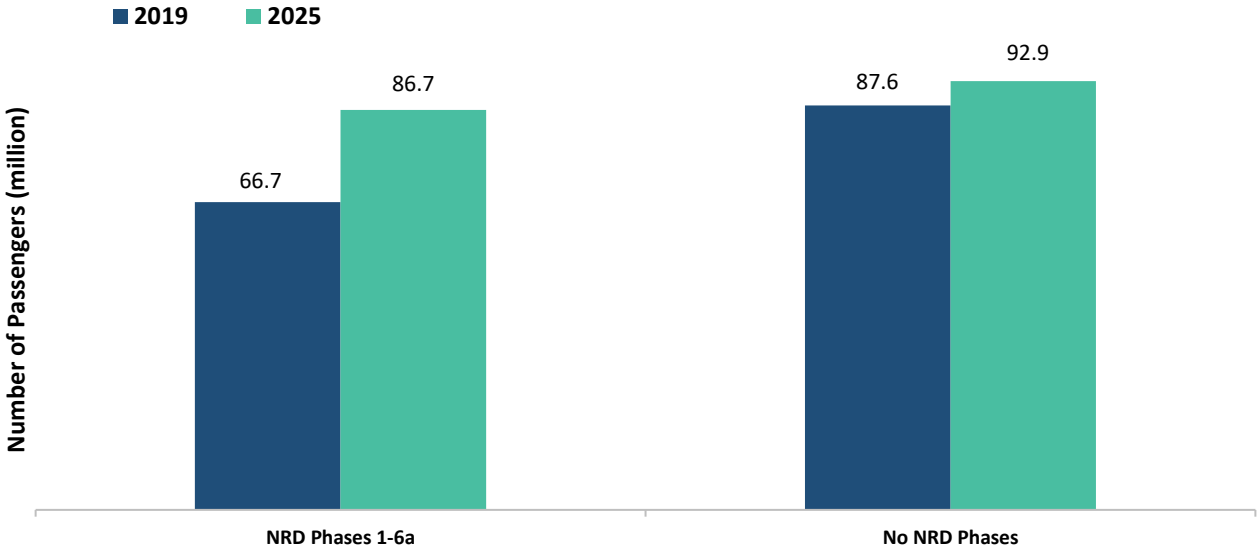


Passenger Boardings

Passenger boardings in Q3 2025 on routes included in NRD Phases 1-6a increased by 24% when compared to Dublin metropolitan bus routes that have not yet been altered in the redesigned network. Overall, the redesigned routes saw a 30% increase in passenger boardings, while other routes experienced an increase of 6%.

Figure 14 below shows annualised estimates of passenger boardings for NRD Phases 1-6a, if all these Phases had been in place over the full year 2025.

Figure 14: Passenger Boardings for Implemented Network Redesign Phases

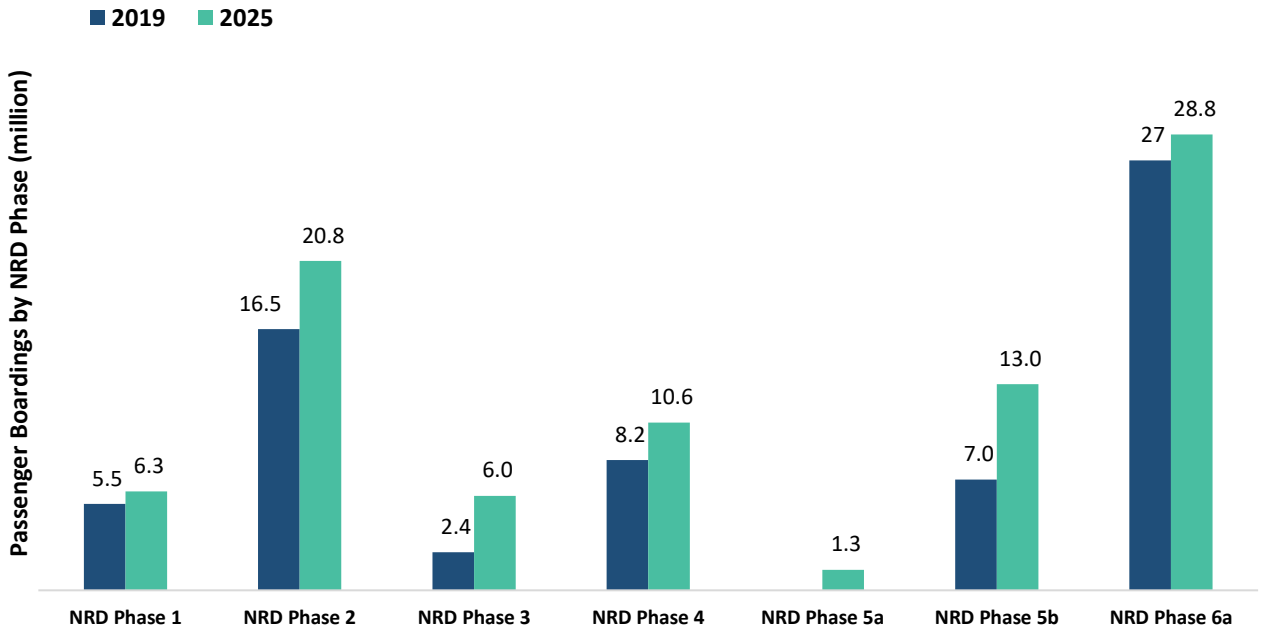


When annualised passenger boarding changes are analysed by implemented phase, results indicate that passenger growth correlates with increased kilometres operated. The analysis confirms that passenger demand responds to additional service supply, consistent with what is observed internationally.

Notably, Phase 3 (northern orbital services) and Phase 5b (western and southern suburban orbital routes) have shown exceptionally strong uptake.

Phase 6a was introduced in three stages, with final changes implemented in June 2025. This phase significantly expands network capacity through more frequent services, improved coverage, and enhanced connectivity. Early indicators suggest encouraging growth, aligning with patterns observed in other cities after major network redesigns, where travel habits evolve gradually. As passengers adapt to new routes and improved offerings, usage is expected to increase further. Performance is being continuously monitored to enable evidence-based refinements and ensure full benefits are realised.

Figure 15: Passenger Boardings by Implemented Network Redesign Phase



Passenger boardings on several routes in NRD Phases 1-6a have shown sustained growth, reflecting the benefits of recent network enhancements. As the network continues to improve, we hope to see further increases in passenger numbers across the network.

Punctuality and Regularity

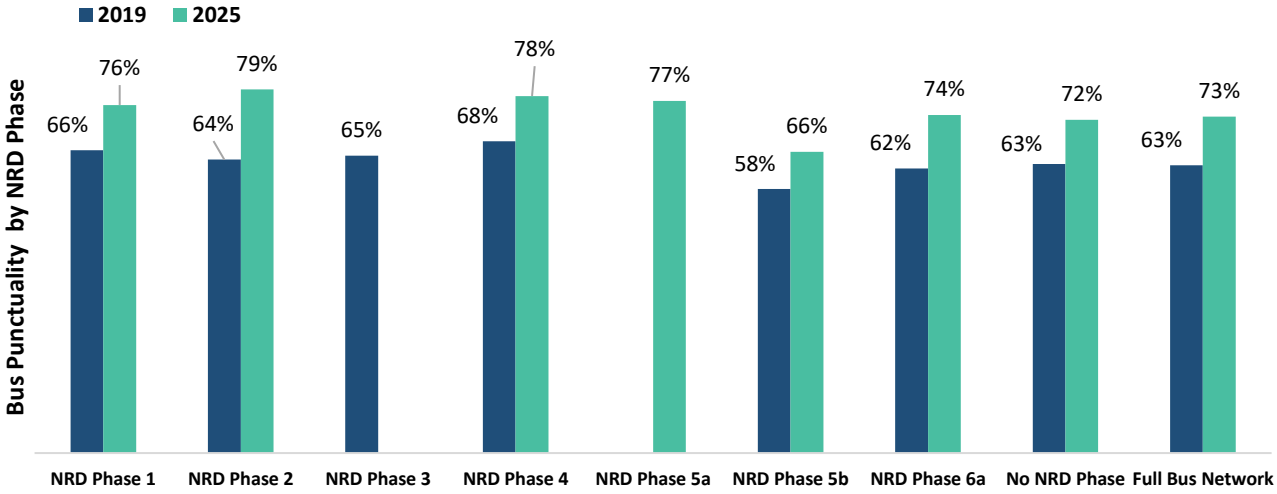
Punctuality of low frequency services (operating four or less services per hour on a weekday) and regularity, or regular spacing, of high frequency services (operating five or more services per hour on a weekday) have improved when compared to performance before the NRD Phases were launched, in part due to more accurate timetables, and in part due to better operator control and management of services. Notwithstanding this, there is significant room for further improvement, which will be dependent to a large extent on bus priority delivered by the Core Bus Corridors (CBC) and improved boarding experience provided by the Next Generation Ticketing (NGT) Project.

Punctuality of low frequency bus routes is assessed against the scheduled departure times for every stop. A bus is deemed to be 'on time' if it departs no more than one minute before or five minutes and 59 seconds after the scheduled departure time for each stop.

The measure of low frequency routes is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Punctuality (\%)} = \frac{\text{Number of Actual Departures on Time}}{\text{Number of Actual Departures}} \times 100$$

Figure 16: Bus Punctuality by Implemented Network Redesign Phase

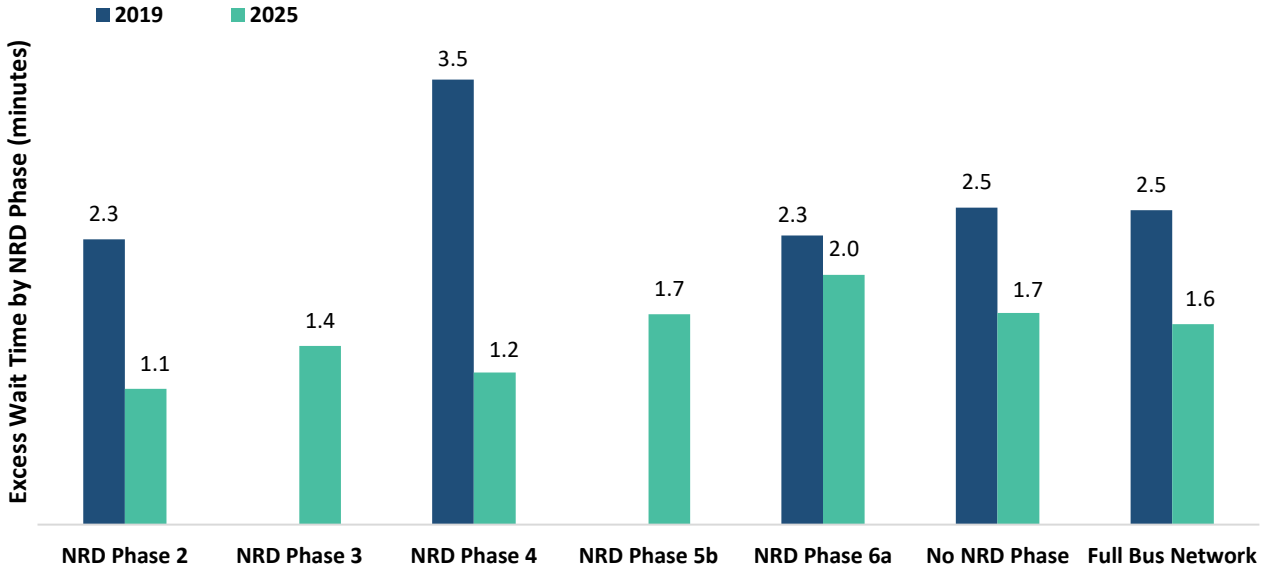


The measure of the performance of high frequency routes, regularity, considers the Excess Wait Time (EWT). EWT provides a measure of the average time a passenger must wait for the next high frequency bus, in excess of the wait time which would be expected as per the schedule.

The regularity measure of high frequency routes is calculated as follows:

EWT (min) = Average Actual Waiting Time (min) - Average Planned Waiting Time (min)

Figure 17: Excess Wait Time by Implemented Network Redesign Phase



Since the full implementation of Phase 6a in January 2025, a reduction in excess wait time has been observed, indicating positive progress.

Reliability

Reliability, measured by kilometres operated compared to scheduled services, has shown a 32% reduction to lost kilometres rate across the entire bus network. Routes implemented as part of Network Redesign have seen a reduction of lost kilometres rate by 18%. This is likely due to improved timetables with more realistic journey times, avoiding the need to

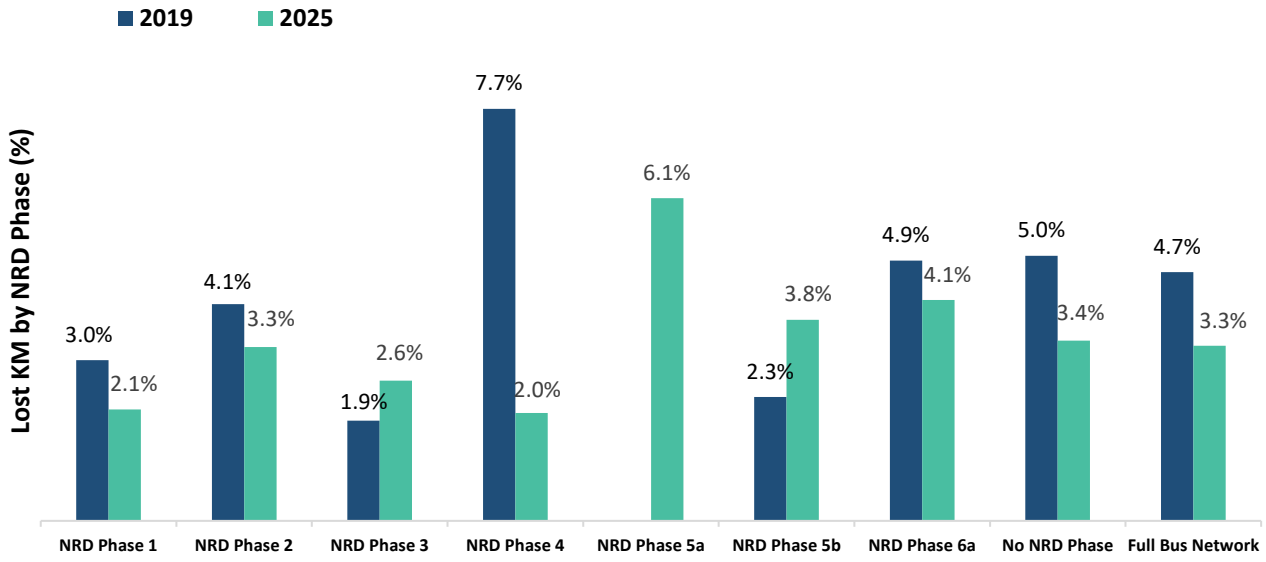
cancel or curtail bus services to keep on schedule. In the chart shown below, the lost kilometre rate decreases on most Phases, which indicates an improvement in the performance.

The Lost Kilometre Rate is calculated as follows:

Step 1: Number of Lost Kilometres (Km) = Total Scheduled Services (Km) – Total Services Operated (Km)

Step 2: Lost Kilometre Rate (%) = $\left(\frac{\text{Number of Lost KM (Km)}}{\text{Total Scheduled Services (Km)}}\right) \times 100$

Figure 18: Kilometres Lost by Implemented Network Redesign Phase



Cost per Kilometre

The average cost per kilometre of NRD Phases 1-6a is €6.56 per kilometre. This cost compares to a cost per kilometre for equivalent routes operating prior to Network Redesign of €6.42 per kilometre. The average cost is influenced by several factors, such as the enhanced service levels during weekends and night-time, as well as the varying expenses associated with different operators managing the routes.

i. Customer Satisfaction Survey

The customer satisfaction research was designed to evaluate Phases 5a, 5b and 6a of the Dublin Network Redesign (NRD) project. The research aimed to assess users' satisfaction with the new bus routes, including in comparison to the previous routes, and also the perceived impact on public transport usage. The research was based on 2,559 face-to-face interviews spread across days of the week and time of the day, between Monday, 18 August-Sunday, 14 September 2025.

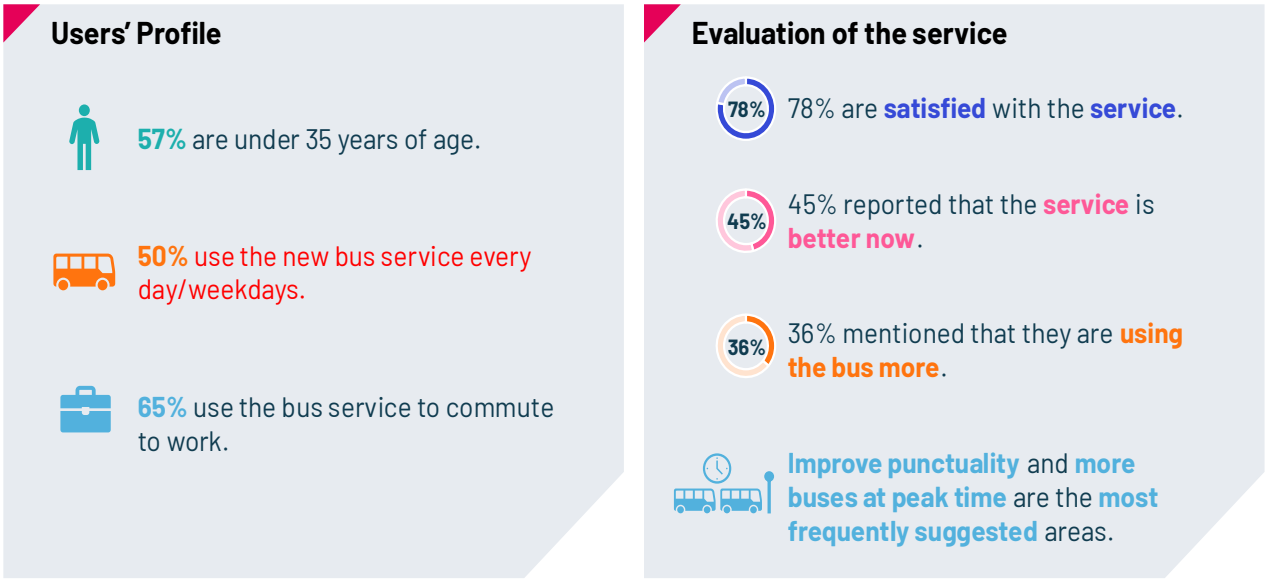


Figure 19: Customer Satisfaction Survey Infographic

The results show that Phases 5a-6a of the Network Redesign project are positively rated by the users, with almost 8 in 10 users of the new bus routes satisfied, with 38% indicating they are 'very' satisfied with the service and overall net satisfaction at 78%.

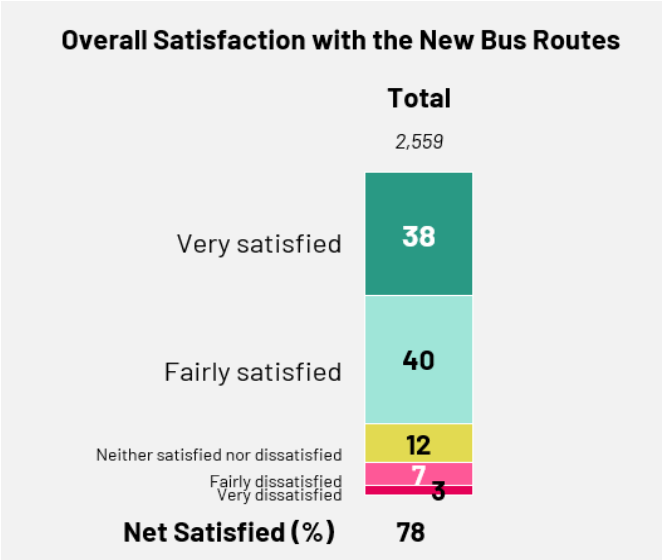


Figure 20: Overall Satisfaction with the New Bus Routes

Satisfaction was higher for the N2-Orbital and E-Spine (81%) while the lowest satisfaction is registered for the W-Orbitals and S-Orbitals (each achieving 77% respectively).

The redesigned routes have attracted new users and have increased frequency of use amongst existing passengers, with 6% of participants stating they have started using the bus since the Phases have been launched, while 36% of participants state they are using the bus more since the Phases have been launched. this incidence is higher for the both the W-Orbitals and S-Orbitals, reporting 45% and 40% increased usage respectively.

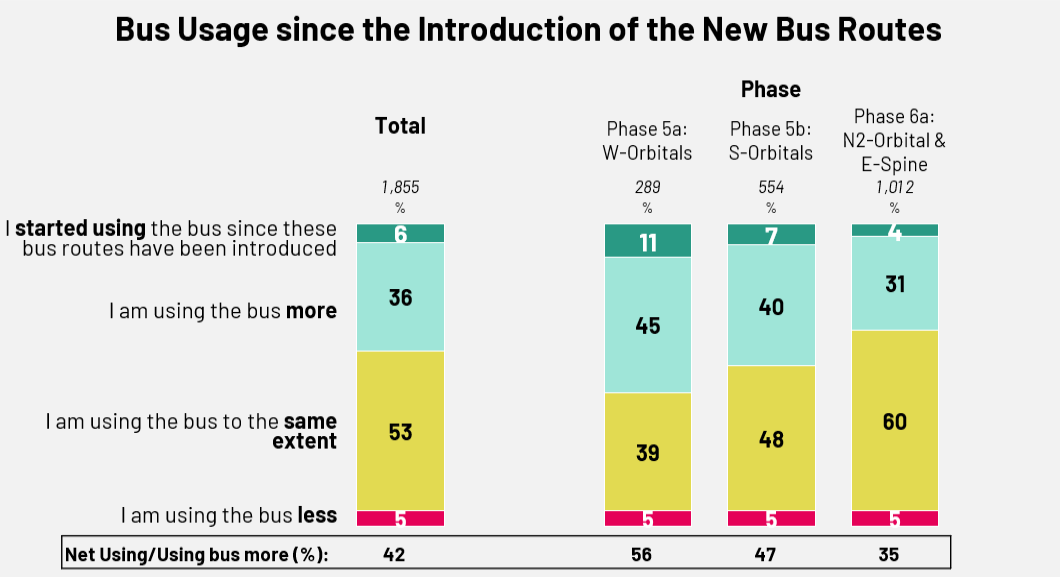


Figure 21: Bus Usage Since the Introduction of the New Bus Routes

Almost half of users surveyed indicated that the service is better now, compared with previous routes, especially for the W-Orbitals where 59% reported improvement.

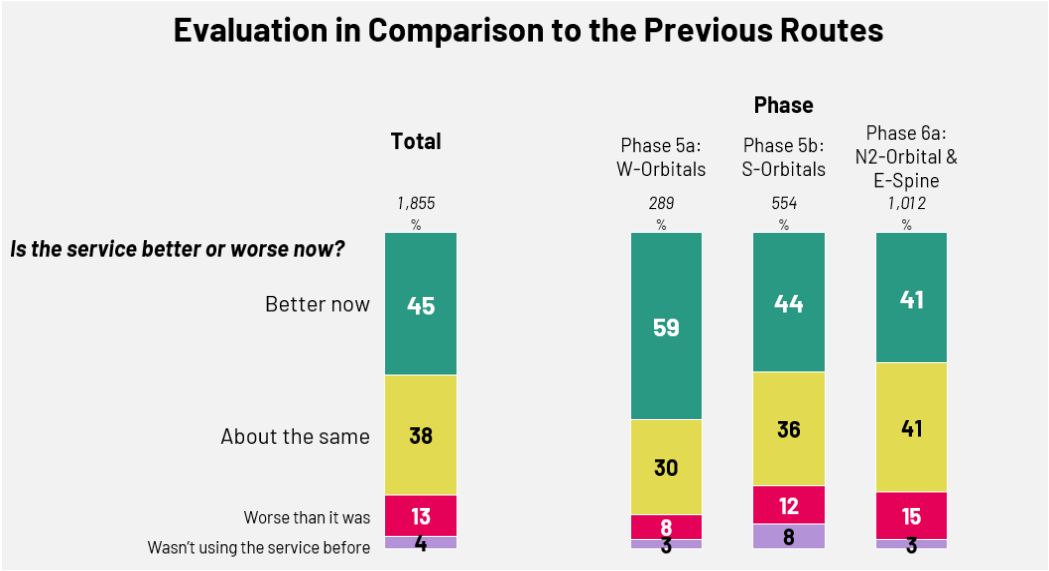


Figure 22: Evaluation in Comparison to the Previous Routes

A fully integrated bus network will only be delivered when all Network Redesign Phases are implemented. It is at this point that the success of the project can be fully assessed. Furthermore, the other elements of the BusConnects Programme, in particular the Core Bus Corridors, will need to be delivered to fully realise the benefits of the BusConnects Programme. In the interim the NTA will continue to evaluate and report on the benefits of Network Redesign project and other initiatives implemented as part of the BusConnects Dublin Programme.

Conclusion

The BusConnects Dublin Programme has already delivered significant passenger benefits through the components initiated so far. However, several key initiatives still need to be implemented to fully realise the programme's benefits. The introduction of bus priority along the Core Bus Corridors and the new ticketing system will improve journey times, service punctuality and reliability, thereby making bus an even more attractive option.

The BusConnects Dublin Programme has shown significant improvements in key performance indicators. For instance, there has been an annualised increase of 12 million, or 62%, in scheduled service kilometres in NRD Phases 1-6a compared to equivalent routes operating prior to the Network Redesign Project. Passenger boardings on routes included in NRD Phases 1-6a increased by 24% when compared to Dublin metropolitan bus routes that have not yet been altered in the redesigned network. Overall, the redesigned routes saw a 30% increase in passenger boardings, while other routes experienced an increase of 6%.

A major milestone has been achieved with the approval of all 12 Core Bus Corridors' schemes and the commencement of construction on the Liffey Valley to City Centre Corridors, the first to enter construction. Building on this progress, the Ballymun/Finglas to City Centre Corridor has become the second scheme to be awarded, with construction to begin in 2026. These developments reinforce the programme's commitment to building a more connected, efficient, and sustainable transport network for Dublin.

The holistic approach of the BusConnects Programme aims to improve customer experience across the entire bus service, addressing concerns such as waiting times and accessibility. This comprehensive strategy sets it apart from isolated projects that may overlook the broader context and user experience. The positive results in customer satisfaction indicate that the programme is already having a beneficial impact on passengers, as the programme progresses into the construction phase.

As recommended by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the BusConnects Programme will continue to publish semi-annual reports documenting and updating the progress of the programme. This ongoing transparency and evaluation will ensure that the programme stays on track to deliver its full range of benefits to the public.

More information can be found in Sustainable transport for a better city | Busconnects. (https://busconnects.ie/)

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