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Route 343 Amendment

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What are your general thoughts on these proposals as a whole?

I am supportive of these proposals

Observations:

New Route 343 (Shannon to Limerick)

The current service, which provides 24 services daily and includes 28 stops, takes approximately one hour end-to-end. Travelling by car takes less than 30 minutes. Some incentivisation needs to be introduced to encourage usage of this service, to reduce the dependency on car usage and to deliver on the ambitions of Ireland 2040 and the Climate Action Plan.

We welcome the higher frequency proposed for this service but, as pointed out above, a simultaneous reduction in journey time is imperative if more people are to be encouraged to use this service. People travelling from Limerick to Shannon (and vice versa) to work, and visitors travelling from Shannon Airport to Limerick don't need/want to take a tour of Shannon; they need a more direct route with minimal stops.

As pointed out in the many responses to submissions we have made, most especially the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan, greater connection is required between the three elements of Shannon – Shannon Town Centre, Shannon Free Zone and Shannon Airport. This could be achieved by introducing a Local Link service in Shannon, to serve its population of 10,000 residents and the further 10,000 who commute daily to Shannon but rarely commute in Shannon. Having a feeder Local Link service would meet the needs of locals and commuters alike...leaving the 343 to connect Limerick and Shannon in a more streamlined way.

Note must also be taken that there is currently no bus service serving Westpark Innovation Campus. Introducing a Local Link service to serve all parts of Shannon Free Zone would greatly increase public transport usage in and around Shannon. In the meantime, a link to this campus is essential. This applies to all bus services serving Shannon Free Zone.

New Route 330 (Shannon to Ennis)

While we welcome the separation of the service between Shannon and Ennis, we would ask that consideration be given to making this more user friendly in terms of the cohort of people it is serving – mostly people working in Shannon by day and night.

The introduction of new night-time services on Route 343 is most welcome; however, given the tailbacks into Ennis at the end of Shannon shift patterns, we would suggest that consideration be given to mirroring the night-time service of Route 343 on Route 330.

New Route 316 (Shannon to Sixmilebridge)

Given the population increase in Sixmilebridge and those commuting from the village to Shannon for work, this new route is most welcome. Note should also be taken of the increasing numbers using the rail service provided via Sixmilebridge railway station and the excellent parking facilities there. While mention has been made of a potential future shuttle bus link serving Sixmilebridge Railway station and Shannon Airport, perhaps it is now opportune to set this in motion by placing a bus stop near the station to encourage those in transit to use the rail services to access Shannon Airport.

New Route 317 (Jetland Centre to Ennis)

We welcome the introduction of a Local Link service serving these towns and villages but question why it terminates at Jetland Shopping Centre, given that most commuters on this route will be travelling to Limerick or making onward journeys within Ireland. Terminating this service at Jetland Shopping Centre will necessitate additional connections to commuters' journeys. We suggest that the terminus for Route 317 should instead be Limerick Colbert Station as this is also a hub to connect passengers with onward bus and rail connections.

Any other comments

Shannon Chamber welcomes the approach being taken by the National Transport Authority (NTA), in partnership with Bus Eireann and TFI Local Link Limerick Clare, to improve the Route 343 service connecting Shannon with Limerick and Ennis and to make amendments to routes serving Sixmilebridge, Quin and Kilmurry, towns supplying a workforce to Shannon.

Acting on behalf of our members, Shannon Chamber has been proactive in providing feedback to a number of transport-related public consultations:

- *The Review of NDP Submission (2021), in which we highlighted the requirement for capital investment in multi-modal transport hubs and networks, and for connections that would support and enable economic activity in regional growth centres and bring benefits to surrounding areas.*
- The Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS), and the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland, in which we also called for
- *connectivity between Shannon to Limerick City Centre and other key locations such as UL and LIT (now TUS) via a fast frequent and reliable bus service.*
- *the development of 'Park and Ride' in both directions – Shannon to Limerick and vice versa and to facilitate access to e.g., inter-city buses.*

With no rail services between Shannon and Limerick and a drive to encourage people to use public transport, it is imperative that the 10,000 people travelling to and from Shannon daily, many of whom live in Limerick and Ennis, be given the option to use public transport.

It is imperative also that passengers using Shannon Airport be given adequate and swift access to Limerick City for in-city stays and onward connections.

We welcome, overall, the changes proposed in this public consultation but would suggest that such changes also take into account services proposed under BusConnects Limerick, e.g., could the 343 service timetable be synchronised to facilitate the smooth transfer of passengers using these services for travelling onward to TUS or UL or indeed to destinations in Limerick, its neighborhoods and beyond. There should be no additional fare to interchange between these buses; a fare structure could be set for such journeys.

The strong connections between Shannon and Limerick, as outlined in the LSMATS, should be considered in all transport plans, be they be for Limerick City, the wider commuter belt, or urban centres.

We note particularly that the LSMATS has made provision for:

- an improvement in local and regional bus connectivity to Shannon (Town Centre, Free Zone and Shannon Airport);
- the introduction of new services between:
 - Limerick City Centre – Shannon Town Centre –Shannon Free Zone – Shannon Airport (Express service)
 - Limerick City Centre – Cratloe – Bunratty –Shannon Town Centre – Shannon Free Zone – Shannon Airport
 - Shannon to TUS and UL

We would therefore ask the question: Has this been taken into consideration in the Route 343 Amendment?

Can a seamless connection be considered between all public transport services serving Shannon, Limerick and Ennis and with onward connections to Cork and Galway?

In making this submission, our ask is that each element of the overall transport strategy for connecting Shannon with Limerick City, Ennis, and onwards to key commutable areas be viewed in a hub and spoke context and not as individual plans servicing their respective areas only.

Efficient and seamless public transport connectivity between Shannon, Limerick, Ennis and commutable towns is vital for delivering the objectives of Ireland 2040.

Documents Attached: No

Boundaries Captured on No

Map: