

**COMHAIRLE CONTAE FHINE GALL
FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2026

ITEM NO. 04

**LARGE SCALE
COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

Question: Councillor J. Hopkins

"To ask the Chief Executive to describe the steps involved in deciding to priorities and realise large scale community projects and infrastructure projects undertaken by Fingal County Council, for example: Cultural Quarter Swords, Malahide Library Extension, New Street Malahide Pedestrianisation, Skerries Cycling Scheme?"

Reply:

Projects are identified and prioritised through an evidence-based strategic planning process. The Council continuously assesses current and future needs using a range of objective information sources, including demographic trends, population projections, service demand analysis, infrastructure deficits and condition, community needs assessments, economic development objectives, statutory obligations, technical studies, audits, and public consultation processes.

This evidence is considered alongside national, regional and local policy objectives, including the Fingal Development Plan, which is prepared and adopted by the elected members and provides the statutory framework for the sustainable growth and development of the county. Through the adoption of the Development Plan, Local Area Plans, annual budgets, Capital Programmes and other strategic policy documents, elected members play a central role in establishing the policy framework and strategic priorities that guide investment decisions across Fingal.

In many service areas, this needs analysis is further developed through the preparation and adoption of specific strategies, masterplans etc. which identify priorities and future investment requirements. For example, the Fingal Library Service Development Plan 2024-2029 identifies strategic library infrastructure projects, including the County Library at the Swords Cultural Quarter together with developments at Baldoyle and Donabate libraries. Other strategies such as Keeping it Green, the Open Space Strategy and the Play Policy for Fingal are similar examples of evidence-based planning approaches that inform investment decisions across a wide range of Council services.

Projects therefore originate from identified needs supported by research, analysis, policy alignment and strategic planning. They are not selected in isolation but emerge from a structured process aimed at ensuring that limited resources are directed towards projects which will deliver the greatest public benefit for the county in support of the Council's adopted strategic objectives.

Once a project reaches a stage where a funding commitment is required, it is included on the Council's Capital Programme and becomes subject to formal governance, appraisal and approval processes.

The availability of capital funding from local, national and external sources can influence the timing and sequencing of project delivery. In many cases, external funding programmes are aligned with national policy priorities and are awarded on the basis of demonstrated need, strategic fit, deliverability and value for money. Such funding often carries specific conditions and may be withdrawn if projects are not progressed within agreed timelines.

Depending on the nature and scale of the project, governance requirements may include compliance with the Public Spending Code and Infrastructure Guidelines, progression through Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) approval stages, National Transport Authority (NTA) gateway requirements or other external funding approval processes, together with the statutory processes associated with inclusion in the Council's rolling Capital Programme.

The Council's Capital Programme, which is presented to the elected members each year for consideration is informed by these evidence-based planning processes, strategic priorities, funding opportunities and governance requirements. Elected members therefore have an important role in shaping the overall investment framework for the county within which projects are delivered.

Projects approved for inclusion in the Capital Programme are subsequently subject to rigorous governance, oversight and assurance processes throughout their lifecycle. These arrangements incorporate both the Council's internal governance structures and the requirements of the relevant funding body and are designed to ensure transparency, accountability and the effective use of public resources.

In the case of the projects referenced, namely the New Street Malahide Pedestrianisation Scheme and the Skerries Active Travel Plan, both projects progressed through the National Transport Authority's governance and gateway approval process. At each stage, detailed submissions, gateway reports and supporting evidence were required to demonstrate strategic justification, project readiness, stakeholder engagement, affordability and value for money before approval could be granted to proceed to the next phase.

Therefore, project identification and prioritisation are informed by a structured, evidence-led planning framework, guided by policies and programmes adopted by the elected members, and subject to robust governance, funding and approval processes before progressing to delivery.

Source of Reply:

David Storey, Director of Environment, Climate Action, Active Travel and Sports

John Quinlivan, Director of Economic Community and Cultural Development

Matthew McAleese, Director of Infrastructure and Transport