



Determination of Public Service Obligation

Public transport services between Portarlington and Kildare Town

November 2024

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 The socio-economic benefits of the services	3
1.3 The extreme urgency associated with the need to secure the services	3
2. Service Analysis	5
2.1 Route 816	5
2.2 Impact of a Withdrawal	6
2.3 Meeting the Needs of the PSO	7
3. Determination	8

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In November 2024 Dublin Coach informed the National Transport Authority of their intention to cease operations on their 816 Portarlinton to Kildare Town service - with effect from midnight 30th November 2024.

This document examines the impact of this cessation of service and determines whether there is now a Public Sector Obligation (PSO) along the 816 corridor from Portarlinton to Kildare Town corridor.

1.2 The socio-economic benefits of the services

The Socio-Economic Benefits of public transport in general and the licensed bus sector are set out below:

- Public transport provides essential services for society by enabling people to travel to and from work, education, shops, hospitals, visiting friends and family and a range of other essential and leisure activities;
- For many people public transport provides the only means of taking such trips; many people do not have access to a car, some are unable to drive due to medical problems, some are too young, some are too old and even for those with access to a car there may be no parking facilities at their destination;
- Public transport is an effective and efficient method of facilitating mobility within and between towns and cities and supports economic activity whilst reducing carbon emissions;
- Without public transport many people are isolated leading to physical and mental health issues;
- If necessary public transport is not provided traffic congestion will escalate causing significant increase in road traffic accidents and fatalities, reduced air quality and suppressed economic activity. Also, a direct result of increased car use and the associated congestion is longer journey times, and a significant deterioration in the quality of life for car drivers and passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and those living close to main roads.

1.3 The extreme urgency associated with the need to secure the services

The withdrawal of the 816 services means that there will be a significant reduction in public transport provision for the residents of Portarlinton. The removal of the 816 service will most acutely be felt by the residents of Portarlinton and Monasterevin with the removal of connection between these two settlements.

While the train does provide for this connection the location of the train stations to the southern extremity of Portarlinton and the northern extremity of the Monasterevin provides a more limited connection for residents.

The lack of convenient public transport services linking the towns of Portarlinton and Monasterevin will mean:

- Reduced access to the wider public transport network for residents of Portarlinton.

- Fewer transport opportunities for residents from Portarlington to the immediate hinterland and lack of connection to Monasterevin.
- Potentially reduced economic activity in the Portarlington area.

2. Service Analysis

2.1 Route 816

The current 816 service operates as follows:

Monday-Sunday: 16 services from 06:35 until 22:05

The route map is shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1 – Route 816 Route Alignment

2.2 Impact of a Withdrawal

The current public transport network in this part of Laois and Kildare is heavily reliant on route 816 operated by Dublin Coach.

Figure 2 shows the connections offered by the 816 to other public transport services in the area. The 816 connects Portarlington with the high frequency 726 Portlaoise to Dublin Airport service at Monasterevin. It also connects Portarlington and Monasterevin to the high frequency 300 Limerick to Dublin City Centre service at the Kildare Village bus stop in Kildare Town. In addition, the 816 also connects with the 829 Portlaoise to Tullamore service in Portarlington.

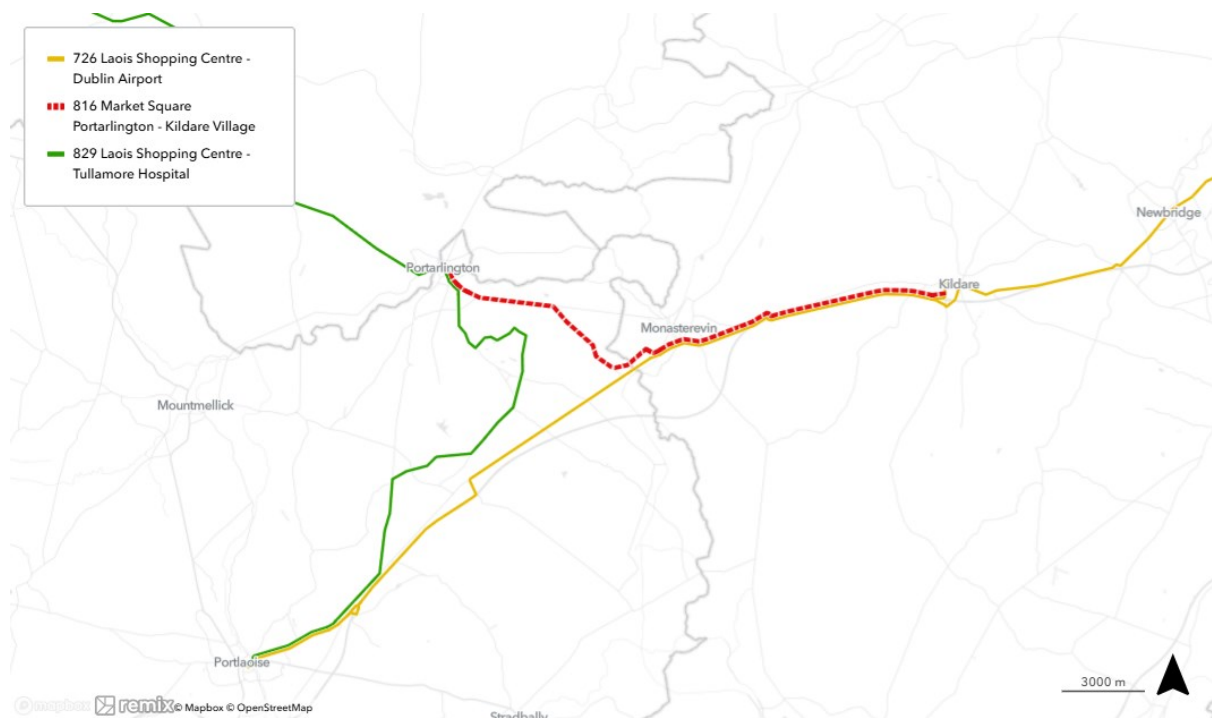


Figure 2 – Context of Route 816 in the wider public transport network

The connections provided by the route 816 service are of particularly importance for the settlements of Portarlington and Monasterevin. Figure 3 highlights the impact the removal of route 816 would have on connection between Portarlington and Monasterevin. Figure 3 also highlights that connectivity between Monasterevin and Kildare town is not as reliant on the 816 with the frequent 726 service operated by Dublin Coach maintaining this connection.

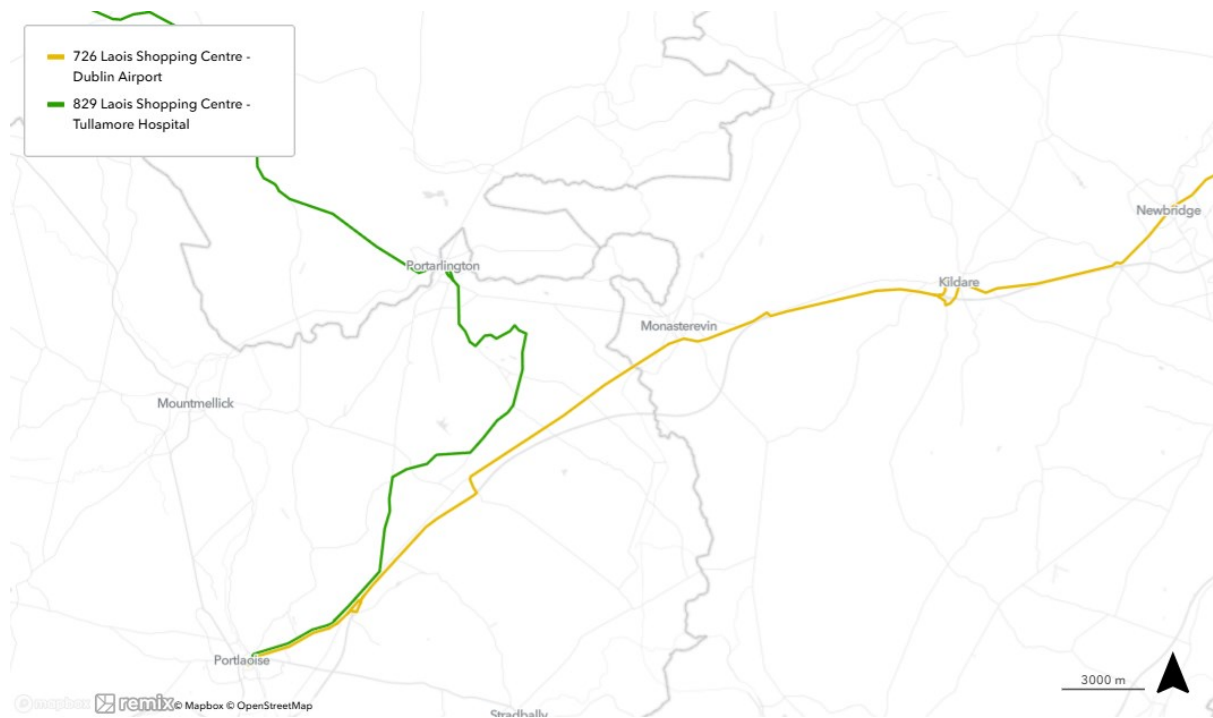


Figure 3 – Impact of removal of route 816

As a result of this, it is concluded that the impact of the withdrawal of Route 816 will be a reduction of service between Portarlinton and Monasterevin and would leave residents in these settlements without any direct and convenient public transport service.

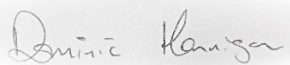
2.3 Meeting the Needs of the PSO

The Authority is proposing that a replacement service is put in place on the Portarlinton to Monasterevin section of the route corridor affected by the withdrawal of the 816 services.

3. Determination

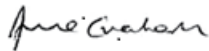
The Authority has determined that there is a public service obligation to serve the settlements of Portarlinton and Monasterevin and to provide a connection between both settlements, resulting from the decision of Dublin Coach to withdraw their service on Routes 816. As a result of this determination, I recommend that the Authority should now:

- Determine the appropriate level of service;
- initiate discussions to secure funding for a new service; and
- undertake an initial exploration into how to procure this new service.



Dominic Hannigan
Head of Public Transport Regulation

Approved:



Anne Graham
Chief Executive Officer

Dated:

2nd December 2024