

An  
Bord  
Pleanála

**Board Direction**  
**BD-016581-24**  
**ABP-313892-22**

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on 13/06/2024.

The Board decided to **approve** the proposed road development based on the reasons and considerations under and subject to the conditions set out below.

## **Reasons and Considerations**

In coming to its decision, the Board had regard to the following:

**European Union legislation**, including of particular relevance:

- The relevant provisions of European Union Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU (Environmental Impact Assessment Directive) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment,
- Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) and Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by 2009/147/EC (Birds Directives) transposed by Part XAB of the Planning and Development 2000 Act, as amended and the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011, which set the requirements for Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union, and
- the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy 2020 (European Commission 2020).

**National and regional planning and related policy, including:**

- the Climate Action Plans 2023 and 2024,
- the National Development Plan 2021-2030,
- Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework,
- the Department of Transport National Sustainable Mobility Policy, 2022,
- the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042,
- the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, 2019,
- the Cycle Design Manual, 2023, and
- other relevant guidance documents.

**Regional and local level policy including:**

- the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031.

**Local Planning Policy including:**

- Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029,
- Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028, and
- Dublin City Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2025.

**The following matters:**

- the nature, scale, and design of the proposed road development as set out in the application for approval and the pattern of development in the vicinity,
- the entirety of the documentation submitted by the National Transport Authority, as the applicant for approval, in support of the proposed development, including the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and the Natura Impact Statement, and the range of mitigation and monitoring measures outlined,
- the submissions made to An Bord Pleanála in connection with the planning application,
- the likely consequences for the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is proposed to carry out the

proposed development and the likely significant effects of the proposed development on European Sites in view of the relevant Sites conservation objectives, and

- the report and recommendation of the Inspector, including the examination, analysis and evaluation undertaken in relation to appropriate assessment and environmental impact assessment.

It is considered that the proposed development would accord with European, national, regional, and local planning that provides strong policy support for delivery of infrastructure for public and active travel modes of transport and the proposed development is acceptable in respect of its likely effects on the environment and its likely consequences for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

#### **Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1:**

The Board agreed with and adopted the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's report that the following sites are European Sites for which there is possibility of significant effects and must therefore be subject to Appropriate Assessment:

- Baldoyle Bay Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004016),
- Dalkey Islands Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004172),
- Howth Head Coast Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004113),
- Howth Head Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000202),
- Ireland's Eye Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002193),
- Lambay Island Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000204),
- Lambay Island Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004069),
- Malahide Estuary Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004025),
- North Bull Island Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004006),
- North Dublin Bay Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000206),



- North-west Irish Sea Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004236),
- Rockabill Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004014),
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 003000),
- Rogerstown Estuary Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004015),
- Skerries Islands Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004122),
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004024),
- South Dublin Bay Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000210), and
- The Murrough Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004186).

### **Appropriate Assessment: Stage 2:**

The Board considered the Natura Impact Statement and all other relevant submissions and carried out an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the European Sites in view of the Sites' conservation objectives. The Board considered that the information before it was sufficient to undertake a complete assessment of all aspects of the proposed development in relation to the Sites' conservation objectives using the best available scientific knowledge in the field.

In completing the assessment, the Board considered, in particular, the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposal both individually or in combination with other plans or projects, specifically upon the European Sites and the following:

- i. Conservation objectives for these European Sites,
- ii. Mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal, and
- iii. Views of prescribed bodies in this regard.

In completing the appropriate assessment, the Board accepted and adopted the appropriate assessment carried out in the Inspector's report in respect of the potential effects of the proposed development on the integrity of the aforementioned European Sites, having regard to the Sites' conservation objectives.

In overall conclusion, the Board was satisfied that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects in view of the Sites' conservation objectives and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of such effects.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment:**

The Board completed an environmental impact assessment of the proposed development, taking into account:

- the nature, scale, location, and extent of the proposed development,
- the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation submitted with the application,
- the submissions received during the course of the application, and
- the Inspector's report.

The Board considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, supported by the documentation submitted by the applicant, adequately considers alternatives to the proposed development, and identifies and describes adequately the direct, indirect, secondary, and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment.

The Board agreed with the examination, set out in the Inspector's report, of the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation submitted by the applicant and submissions made in the course of the planning application.

### **Reasoned Conclusion for Environmental Impact Assessment:**

The Board considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, supported by the documentation submitted by the applicant, provided information which is reasonable and sufficient to allow the Board to reach a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the proposed development on the environment, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment.



The Board is satisfied that the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report is up to date and complies with the provisions of European Union Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU and the provisions of Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993, as amended.

The Board considered that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development, during construction and operation, on the environment are those arising from the impacts listed below.

The main significant effects, both positive and negative, are:

- Negative impacts on **human health and population** arising from construction include noise, dust and traffic inconvenience to residents of neighbouring properties including sensitive receptors. **Noise and dust** impacts will likely arise during the construction phase from construction activities. However, these impacts will be mitigated through adherence to best practice construction measures in relation to dust and the use of noise abatement at sensitive locations. Significant noise impacts arise in relation to construction noise during nighttime and weekend hours when thresholds are lower. Works will generally be carried out in daytime hours causing no significant effects. In the event that works are required during nighttime or weekend hours, liaison with residents in this regard and the use of noise abatement will reduce the level of impacts. Noise disturbance from the operation of the development can be ruled out as the infrastructure will support the bringing forward of Low / Zero Emissions Bus Fleet, providing improved active travel space and a reduction in cars/private vehicles, which collectively will have a positive impact on operational noise. Significant impacts arising from noise and dust disturbance during the construction, operational and decommissioning stages will therefore not arise. Adequate mitigation measures are proposed to ensure that these impacts are not significant. Negative **traffic** impacts will likely arise during the construction phase will be mitigated through the implementation of a Construction Stage Traffic Management Plan and a Construction Management Plan. Whilst some localised impacts arising from road closures may arise, significant impacts arising from traffic can be ruled out.

- The proposed development will have a significant positive effect on **human health and population** and **Air and Climate** during the operation phase due to the displacement of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere arising from an increased use of public transport which will be moving to Low / Zero Emissions Bus Fleet and active travel and the reduction of cars/private vehicles on the route. Negative impacts during construction relate to the embodied carbon of construction materials which will have a negative significant short-term impact. The proposed scheme is estimated to result in total construction phase carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent emissions of 7,699 tonnes embodied carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent for materials over a 24-month period, which is not significant in terms of Ireland's national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions targets particularly when taking into account that the delivery of the enhanced infrastructure will provide a much improved basis for bringing forward better public and active transport modes into the future.
- Negative impacts on **water** during construction could arise in the event of accidental spillages of chemicals, hydrocarbons or other contaminants entering watercourses or groundwater via piling activities during the construction phase of the development. These potential impacts will be mitigated by measures outlined within the application documentation and can therefore be ruled out.
- Negative impacts on **biodiversity** relate to the removal of habitat in the form of hedgerows and treelines. Such impacts are not considered significant and can adequately be mitigated for within the scheme. Vegetation will be planted in the vicinity to bolster existing treelines and hedgerow. Significant impacts are therefore not expected in this regard. The avoidance of trees with roosting potential for bats and the maintenance of commuting corridors, as well as pre-construction bat surveys and the use of low lux directional lighting at compounds and at works areas during construction will ensure significant impacts to bats are avoided. Adequate mitigation measures including compensatory planting and pre-construction surveys, are proposed to ensure the protection of sensitive flora and fauna encountered and to prevent the spread of invasive species. Significant impacts to biodiversity can therefore be ruled out.



The Environmental Impact Assessment Report has considered that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development, during construction and operation, on the environment would be primarily mitigated by environmental management measures, as appropriate. Following mitigation, no residual significant long-term negative impacts on the environment or sensitive receptors will occur.

Having regard to the above, the Board is satisfied that the proposed development will not have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects on the environment. The Board is satisfied that the reasoned conclusion is up to date at the time of making the decision and that the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report complies with the provisions of Article 3, 5 and Annex (IV) of European Union Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU and the provisions of Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993, as amended.

#### **Proper Planning and Sustainable Development:**

The proposed road development would deliver a key component of the National Transport Authority's Bus Connects programme with the stated aim to improve bus services across the country. It would also provide safer and much improved infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists and would deliver sustainable connectivity and integration with other transport services. The public realm along the bus corridor would also be improved.

The Board considered that the proposed road development, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, would be in accordance with national, regional, and local planning policies, including multiple policies and objectives set out in the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 and having regard to all relevant provisions, including zoning objectives, at or adjoining the overall scheme area. It is further considered that the need, justification and purpose of the proposed road development has been adequately demonstrated, that it is acceptable in terms of its likely effects on the environment and that an approval for the proposed road development would be consistent with national climate ambitions and with the relevant provisions of the Climate Action Plans 2023 and 2024 through the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public



transport service, which supports the achievement of Ireland's emission reduction targets. The proposed road development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### **Conditions**

1. The proposed road development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed particulars.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity.

2.
  - (a) All mitigation, environmental commitments and monitoring measures identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report shall be implemented in full as part of the proposed development.
  - (b) All mitigation and environmental commitments identified in the Natura Impact Statement shall be implemented in full as part of the proposed development.

**Reason:** In the interests of development control, public information, and clarity.

3. In accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, a suitably experienced and qualified ecologist will be appointed by the contractor. The ecologist will advise the contractor on ecological matters during construction, communicate all matters in a timely manner to the developer (National Transport Authority) and statutory authorities as appropriate, acquire any licences/consents required to conduct the work, and supervise and direct the ecological measures associated with the permitted scheme. Where appropriate, monitoring shall be undertaken by specialists. Monitoring schedules shall be

included in Site Specific Habitats Protection and Re-instatement Method Statements.

**Reason:** In the interest of environmental protection.

4. Prior to the commencement of any works associated with the development hereby permitted, the developer shall submit a Construction Traffic Management Plan and a Construction Stage Mobility Management Plan for the construction phase of the development for the written agreement of the planning authority. The Construction Stage Mobility Management Plan shall promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking by personnel accessing and working on the construction site. The agreed Construction Traffic Management Plan and Construction Stage Mobility Management Plan shall be implemented in full during the course of construction of the development.

**Reason:** In the interests of traffic safety and promoting sustainable travel during the construction period.

5. In accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, all works to protected structures, and structures of cultural heritage interest shall be monitored and recorded by an Architectural Conservation Specialist, Re-instatement Method Statements shall be submitted to the planning authority to be held on file. The Architectural Conservation Specialist shall ensure adequate protection of the retained and historic fabric during the proposed works and across all preparatory and construction phases. Any features of new architectural heritage shall be made known to the Conservation Section of Dublin City Council as soon as is practicably possible.

**Reason:** In the interest of environmental protection.

6. Noise monitoring shall be carried out during the construction phase of the proposed road development by the developer to ensure that construction noise



threshold levels ( $L_{Aeq}$ , period) shall not exceed the levels set out in Table 9.10 (Construction Noise Threshold (CNT) levels for the proposed scheme) of Chapter 9 (Noise and Vibration) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. During the construction phase, noise monitoring shall be carried out at representative noise sensitive locations as the work progresses along the scheme to evaluate and inform the requirement and/or implementation of noise management measures. Noise monitoring shall be conducted in accordance with ISO 1996–1 (ISO 2016) and ISO 1996–2 (ISO 2017).

**Reason:** In the interests of management of construction noise and protection of adjoining amenities.

7. Drainage arrangements, including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the relevant planning authority for such works in respect of both the construction and operation phases of the proposed development. Any new or improved surface water outfalls shall be constructed in a manner which protects riparian habitat and does not result in excessive erosion of such habitat.

**Reason:** In the interest of environmental protection.

8. Prior to commencement of development, the developer, and/or any agent acting on its behalf, shall prepare in consultation with the relevant statutory agencies, an updated Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), incorporating all mitigation measures indicated in the Natura Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Assessment Report and a demonstration of proposals to adhere to best practice and protocols.

The updated CEMP shall also include details of intended construction practice for the development, including hours of working, compound/works area lighting, noise management measures and surface water management proposals.

The construction of the development shall be constructed in accordance with the updated CEMP.

**Reason:** In the interest of protecting the environment, the landscape, the integrity of European Sites, and sensitive receptors and in the interest of public health.

9. The developer shall monitor queuing time/delays at each works location and record traffic flows on the local road network at locations to be agreed with the planning authority. Such monitoring information shall be provided in a report to the planning authority on a weekly basis.

**Reason:** In the interest of orderly development.

10. Prior to the replacement of trees, hedging and planting which is to be removed the National Transport Authority shall liaise with the relevant landowner with regard to the species, size and location of all replacement vegetation. The National Transport Authority shall also employ the services of an appropriately qualified arboriculturist and Landscape Architect for the full duration of the proposed works to ensure landscaping and tree works are implemented appropriately.

**Reason:** In the interests of visual and residential amenity.

11. Tree protection measures for trees proposed to be retained shall be put in place prior to the commencement of development or phases of development.

**Reason:** In the interest of the protection of biodiversity.

12. All details of soft landscaping shall be submitted to the planning authority prior to implementation.

**Reason:** In the interest of protection of biodiversity and visual amenity

13. Comprehensive details of the proposed public lighting system to serve the proposed scheme shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority, prior to commencement of development.

**Reason:** In the interests of public safety and visual amenity.



14. The developer shall facilitate the preservation, recording and protection of archaeological materials or features that may exist within the site. In this regard, the developer shall –
- (a) employ a suitably-qualified archaeologist who shall monitor all site investigations and other excavation works, and
  - (b) provide arrangements, acceptable to the planning authority, for the recording and for the removal of any archaeological material which the authority considers appropriate to remove. In default of agreement on any of these requirements, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

All archaeological pre-construction investigations shall be carried out in accordance with the details specified with the Environmental Impact Assessment Report submitted with the application.

**Reason:** In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the site and to secure the preservation and protection of any remains that may exist within the site.

15. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit an Invasive Species Management Plan to the planning authority, which includes details of a pre-construction survey to be carried out. The plan shall include full details of the eradication of such invasive species from the development site prior to construction or if discovered during construction as soon as is practicably possible.

**Reason:** In the interests of nature conservation and mitigating ecological damage that could occur.

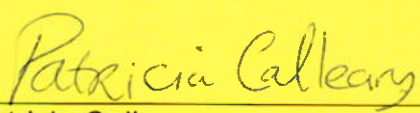
16. (a) Trees to be felled shall be examined prior to felling and demolition to determine the presence of bat roosts. Any clearance works shall be in accordance with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland Guidelines for the Treatment of Bats During the Construction of National Road Schemes.

- (b) No ground clearance shall be undertaken, and no vegetation shall be cleared from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March to the 31<sup>st</sup> day of August, unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority.

**Reason:** In the interest of protection of local biodiversity.

**Note:** The Board considered the planning history referenced in the inspector's report and also considered and took into account a more recent application approved by An Bord Pleanála for a large scale residential development (ABP-315709) at lands at Blanchardstown Town Centre located primarily to the west of the proposed bus interchange at this location. The Board noted that the residential development application evidently considered the current proposed Bus Connects road development and the Board was satisfied that the current proposal now before it integrates with the permitted residential development.

**Board Member**

  
Patricia Calleary

**Date:** 14/06/2024